Kitāb al-Luma'. Ed.
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INTRODUCTION

In the Name of God, the Merciful,
the Beneficent ! On Him I call for help !

1. Praise be to God, munificent and praiseworthy, all glorious and supreme, Lord of splendor and magnificence ! I praise Him for His copious bounty and generous largess ! And I testify that there is no god at all save God alone ! No partner has He ! With Him will the encounter be ! And I testify that Muḥammad is His servant and His Apostle, the Seal of the Prophets !

2. You (1) have asked me to compose for you a compendious book which will contain a summary exposition of of the arguments which elucidate what is true and refute what is vain and empty assertion. And I have thought it good to help you by doing that — may God direct you aright, grant you abundant graces, and aid you to acquire a full knowledge of all that you seek !

(1) There seems to be no clue to the identity of the person addressed.

CHAPTER ONE

DISCUSSION OF GOD'S EXISTENCE AND ATTRIBUTES (1)

QUESTION

3. Q.(2) What is the proof that creation has a maker who made it and a governor who wisely ordered it?

A. The proof of that is that the completely mature man was originally semen, then a clot, then a small lump, then flesh and bone and blood (3). Now we know very well that he did not translate himself from state to state. For we see that at the peak of his physical and mental maturity he is unable to produce hearing and sight for himself, or to create a bodily member for himself. That proves that he is even more incapable of doing that when he is weak and imperfect. For if he

(1) *Irshād*, 36 ff.; *Justo Medio*, 59 ff.; for Mu'tazilite views, *Nādir*, I, 37 ff.; for a Shi'ite presentation, *Hillī*, 9 ff.; for a philosopher's view, *Teología*, 207 ff. I would remind the reader that the references which I give here, and on other questions, are merely a few suggestions taken from the many which could be given.

(2) I have chosen to use the symbols « Q », « O », and « A » (Question, Objection, Answer) rather than to weary the reader with the constant repetition of translations of the full Arabic phrases, such as: If someone asks; Someone may say; If they say; One should say to him; etc. This catechetical form of presentation indicates that this work, like so many others, was intended as a kind of practical handbook of polemics.

(3) Cf. Qur. 22.5 and 23.14.

can do a thing when he is imperfect, a fortiori he can do it when he is mature; and if he cannot do a thing when he is mature, a fortiori he is incapable of it when he is imperfect. From seeing him a baby, then a youth, then a man in the prime of life, then an old man, we know very well that he does not translate himself from youth to old age and decrepitude. For even though a man strain to rid himself of old age and decrepitude and to restore himself to his youthful condition, he cannot do it. So what we have said proves that it is not he who translates himself through these states, and that he has a translator who translates him from state to state and governs his every condition: for his translation from state to state without a translator and governor is impossible. (4)

4. An example which makes that clear is the fact that cotton cannot change into spun thread and woven cloth without weaver or craftsman or supervisor. If a man selected some cotton and then waited for it to become spun thread and woven cloth without craftsman or weaver, he would be beyond the pale of reason and abysmally ignorant. Likewise if a man went to a waste land and found there no castle already built, and waited for the clay to change into bricks which would join together without workman or builder, he would be witless. Now if the change of semen to clot, then little lump, then flesh and blood and bone be an even greater marvel, it proves all the more forcibly that there is a maker who made the semen and translated it from state to state.

5. God Most High has said: « Do you not then see what you eject? Is it you who create it? Or are We the creators? (56.58-59). And they could not affirm with proof that

(4) This argument, though rational, is essentially Qur'ānic in inspiration. Later Ash'arites, such as Bāqillānī, Juwainī, and Ghazālī, give proofs which are more strictly philosophical. Ash'arī himself may have done so in other works.

they created what they ejected. Despite their desire to have a child, he would not come; and despite their unwillingness to have him, he would come. And God Most High has said, reminding His creatures of His unicity, « And in yourselves (there are also signs). Well then, do you not see ? » (51.21). He thus declares to them their impotence and their pressing need of a maker who made them and a governor who governs them wisely.

6. Q. What makes you sure that the semen did not preexist eternally ?

A. If your assumption were true, the semen could never have become operative and effective, nor could it ever have undergone change and mutation. For the eternal cannot be translated and changed, nor can it be subject to the characteristics of temporal production. (5) For what is so subject, and also inseparable from lowliness, can never be free from the characteristics of temporal production; and what is not prior to the temporally produced is itself temporally produced and made. (6) Therefore it is false to affirm the eternal preexistence of the semen or of any other bodies.

(5) Usually I use « temporal production » and « temporally produced » to translate *ḥadath (ḥudūth)* and *muḥdath*. The Arabic root *ḥ-d-th* seems to convey the general idea of « happening » or « being new ». The essential note of a being which is *muḥdath* (subject to *ḥadath*) is that its existence had a beginning. Cf. Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 41.10 ff. and 73.5 ff. Since the existence of such a being has a beginning, it must be produced in time. Thus the contrary of *qidam al-ʿālam* (the eternity of the world) is *ḥadath al-ʿālam*. Cf. also the words and meaning given by Gauthier in his *Hayy ben Yaqdhān*, Beyrouth, 1936, p. 164 (of the Arabic part). Others (and occasionally myself) prefer such translations as: contingent, produced, created, etc. No doubt Ashʿarī and Bāqillānī looked upon *muḥdith* (agent form of *aḥdatha*) as a synonym of « creator ».

(6) This principle is used again in N° 93.

QUESTION

7. Q. Why do you claim that the Creator is unlike creatures ?

A. If He were like them, His relation to temporal production would be the same as theirs. And if He were like them, He would have to be like them either in all respects or in some one respect. So if He were like them in all respects, He would be temporally produced, as they are, in all respects. And if He were like them in some one respect, He would be temporally produced in that respect in which He was like them. But it is impossible for the temporally produced to have preexisted eternally. And God Most High has said: « There is nothing like unto Him » (42.11/9); and, « No one is His equal » (112.4). (7)

QUESTION

8. Q. Why do you say that the Maker of things is one?

A. The government of two will be neither harmonious nor consistently effective, but impotence will inevitably attach to one or to both of them. For if one of the two wills a man's life and the other wills his death, one of three things must ensue: the will of both together will be accomplished, or the will of neither will be accomplished, or the will of only one will be accomplished. Now it is impossible that the will of both together be accomplished, for the body cannot be simultaneously living and dead. So if the will of both together be not accomplished one must conclude to the impotence of both

(7) The argument of this paragraph is used also in the *Risāla*, N° 15. The two texts cited from the Qurʾān seem to have provided Ashʿarism with a theological cornerstone which was also a touchstone. Logically Ashʿarī seems to have no room in his thought for the analogy of being. But whether or not, in practice, he really subscribed to an agnostic fideism is another question.

— and the impotent can be neither God nor eternal. And if the will of only one be accomplished, impotence necessarily attaches to the one whose will is not accomplished — and the impotent can be neither God nor eternal. Thus what we have said proves that the Maker of things is one. And God Most High has said: «Were there gods other than God in them, the heavens and the earth would be in disorder» (21.22). This is the meaning of the argument which we have just presented. (8)

QUESTION

9. Q. What is the proof that the restoration of creatures (9) is possible ?

A. The proof of that is the fact that God did not create them initially according to an antecedent exemplar. So if their initial creation was due solely to Him, He is not incapable of creating them anew. God Himsef has said: « He has propounded to Us a parable, forgetting the while the fact of his own creation. He asks: Who will quicken bones when they have decayed ? Answer: He will quicken them who produced them a first time, for His omniscience encompasses every creature » (36.78-79). Thus He made the first creation a proof of the possibility of the last creation, because the same concept is realized in both. Then He continued: «He who makes fire for you from the green tree — for lo ! you kindle fire from it » (36.80). Thus He made the appearance of fire, notwithstanding its heat and dryness, from the green tree,

(8) The unicity of God is the chief dogma of Islam — *Lā ilāha illallāh* ! (There is no other divinity at all save God !) The argument given here is the classic argument from *tamānuʿ* (mutual hindrance), inspired, as is evident, by the Qurʾān itself. Cf. *Risāla*, N° 8. Averroes criticized this proof: *Teologia*, 238-240. Algazel's proof is more « philosophical » : *Justo Medio*, 127-134.

(9) The dogma in question here is that of the resurrection of the body. Cf. *Risāla*, N°ˢ 9-11. The reader may consult EI or Hwb, s.v. Ḳiyāma, for details on Muslim eschatology.

despite the latter's being moist and damp, a proof of the possibility of His creating life in decayed and crumbling bones and of His power to create its like. Then He said: « Is He then who created the heavens and the earth unable to create men like them ? » (36.81) This is the passage on which we rely in arguing about the possibility of the restoration of creatures.

10. This is also the proof of the validity of argumentation and reasoning. (10) For God Most High applied the same judgment to the thing and its like and made the way and course of one term of comparison the course of its like, because He has said: « God gives life by an initial creation, then restores it. » (30.11/10). And He said: « And it is He who gives life by an initial creation, then restores it: and that is very easy for Him » (30.27/26) — meaning: it is easy for Him. Thus He likened the initial creation to the restoration.

11. Q. Enlighten me further about the validity of reasoning.

A. God most High has related what Abraham said when he saw the star: « He (Abraham) said: This is my Lord. Then when it set he said: I like not those who set. Then when he saw the moon rising he said: This is my Lord. Then when it set he said: Unless my Lord guide me I shall certainly be one of the people who err ! » (6.76-77). Thus Abraham joined the moon and the star in the judgment that one of them cannot possibly be God and Lord since setting is common to both. Now this is the reasoning and inference which some repudiate and eschew.

QUESTION

12. Q. Why do you deny that God Most High is a body ?

A. We deny it because the speaker must mean :

(10) This theme, briefly discussed here, is the subject of the *Risāla*.

Why do you deny that God is long, broad, and united ? — or he must mean calling God a body, even though He be not long, broad, united, and deep. (11) Now if he means: Why do you deny that He is long, broad, and united ? — as that is said of the bodies of which we have experience — why this is impossible, because the united is not one thing. For the numerically least of unions is that of two things, since the thing which is one cannot be united to itself. But we have shown above that God is *one* thing. Hence it would be false to say that He is united. On the other hand if the speaker means: Why do you not call God a body, even though He be not long, broad, and united ? — why it is not for us to assign names, and we may not call God by a name which He has not applied to Himself and which has not been applied to Him by His Apostle and on which, and the meaning of which, there is no consensus of the Muslims.

QUESTION

13. Q. Why do you say that God is knowing ? (12)

A. Well-made works can be wisely ordered only by one who is knowing. That is clear from the fact that a man who lacks skill and knowledge cannot weave patterned brocade or execute fine points of craftsmanship. So when we behold in man an embodiment of wise organization, such as

(11) The minimum number of atoms required to constitute a body was disputed ; but the essential note of « body » was union, or composition (*taʾlīf*) — cf. *Tamhīd*, 41.16 ff. On « atomism » the reader may consult : S. Pines, *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre*, Berlin, 1936. (Arabic translation by Abū Rīdah, Cairo, 1365/1946).

(12) In this and the following numbers of this chapter five of God's essential attributes are discussed. The other two of the classic seven, speech and will, are considered in more detail in the next two chapters. In Nos 13-15 Ashʿarī is concerned with proving that God is knowing, powerful, living, hearing, and seeing. It is clear that these epithets are taken from the Qurʾān.

the life arranged in him by God, and his hearing and sight, and the ways in which food and drink are distributed in him, and his perfection and completeness, and when we behold the firmament with its sun, its moon, its stars, and their courses, we see in that proof that the maker of what we have mentioned could not have made it without knowing its mode and nature. Besides, if works of wisdom could be produced by one who is not knowing, we could not know but that perhaps all the determinations, dispositions and works which proceed from living beings proceed from them while they are unknowing. The impossibility of that proves that well-made works can be produced only by one who is knowing.

14. It is likewise true that works can be produced only by one who is powerful and living. For if they could be produced by one who is not powerful and not living, we should not know but that perhaps all the things which proceed from men proceed from them while they are powerless and dead. Since that is impossible, the works prove that God is living and powerful.

QUESTION

15. Q. Why do you say that God is hearing and seeing ?

A. One who is living, if he be not qualified by some defect which prevents his perceiving audible and visible things when these exist, must be hearing and seeing. Therefore, since God is living, and since He cannot be subject to such ailments as deafness, blindness, and so forth — for ailments prove the temporal production of him who is subject to them — it is certain that God is hearing and seeing. (13)

(13) Ashʿarī's acceptance of the epithets applied to God in the Qurʾān seems to be very literal indeed. There is no suggestion, as I have already mentioned, of an awareness of the analogy of being

QUESTION

16. Q. Do you maintain that God has always been knowing, powerful, hearing and seeing? (14)

A. So we maintain.

Q. What is the proof of that?

A. The proof of that is that one who is living, if he be not knowing, is qualified by some contrary of knowledge such as ignorance, doubt or other defects. So if the Creator had been ever living, but unknowing, He would have been qualified by some contrary of knowledge such as ignorance, doubt or other defects. But if He had been ever qualified by some contrary of knowledge, it would have been impossible for Him ever to know. For if the contrary of knowledge had been eternal, it would have been impossible for it to cease to be; and if it had been impossible for it to cease to be, it would have been impossible for Him to have made works of wisdom. Hence, since God has made such works, and since they prove that He is knowing, it is true and certain that God has always been knowing, since it is clearly impossible for Him to have been ever qualified by some contrary of knowledge.

17. Similarly, had God been ever living, but not powerful, He would necessarily have been ever impotent, ever qualified by some contrary of power. And had His impotence

and the different kinds of predication. It is also noteworthy that, even though he is opposed in principle to the application to God of conclusions based on human experience, when Ashʿarī seeks to rationalize his own dogmatic position he falls back on just such conclusions. This will be clearer in Nos 34-5, where he proves the principle on which his argument for the existence of the divine attributes is based.

(14) In this and the following number Ashʿarī sets himself to prove the antecedent eternity of the five divine attributes under discussion. He has not proved explicitly that God Himself is eternal. But we must remember that this work is not a detailed examination of all the points involved in Ashʿarī's dogmatic position.

been eternal, it would have been impossible for Him ever to be powerful and for acts to proceed from Him. Likewise, had God been ever living, but not hearing and seeing, He would have been ever qualified by some contrary of hearing such as deafness and other ailments, and by some contrary of sight such as blindness and other ailments. But it is impossible for the Creator to be subject to ailments because they are among the characteristics of temporal production. So what we have said proves that God has always been knowing, powerful, seeing and hearing.

QUESTION

18. Q. Why do you say that the Creator has a knowledge by which He knows? (15)

A. Just as works of wisdom do not proceed from one of us unless he be knowing, so also they do not proceed from one of us unless he have knowledge. If the works did not prove the knowledge of the man from whom they proceed, then they would not prove that the man from whom they proceed is knowing. Consequently, if works proved that the Creator is knowing by analogy with their proving that we are knowing, but did not prove that the Creator has knowledge by analogy with their proving that we have knowledge, it would be allowable for someone to claim that works prove our knowledge, but do not prove that we are knowing. If this be impossible, the assertion of this speaker is also impossible.

19. Q. Why do you deny that works of wisdom do not prove the knowledge of the man who is knowing in the same

(15) In this number and the rest of the chapter Ashʿarī seeks to prove that God has a knowledge, a power, a life, a hearing, and a sight, i.e. that He is not only knowing, but knowing by a knowledge, etc. The necessity of such proof seems to be dictated by such texts as are quoted in No 24.

way that they prove him to be knowing? For the meaning of his being knowing is not that he has knowledge — because the knowing man may be known to be knowing by one who does not know that he has knowledge.

A. If you may make this claim, then another may claim that works of wisdom prove that I have knowledge of of them, but do not prove that I am knowing. For the meaning of knowing is not that one has knowledge, since a man may be known to have knowledge by one who does not know him to be knowing. Tit for tat! However I hold the questioner's allegation to be false because I hold that one's being knowing means that he has knowledge. Thus one who does not know that Zaid has knowledge does not know that Zaid is knowing.

20. Q. Why do you deny that the work of wisdom proves that a man has a knowledge which is distinct from him, inasmuch as you maintain that it proves a knowledge ?

A. Granted that the work of wisdom proves that a man has knowledge, it does not therefore prove that the knowledge is distinct from him, just as, though it proves that the man is knowing, it does not prove that he is in any way distinct. ([16]) Moreover « otherness » means that one of two

(16) This seems to be a correct translation, though the reader may ask: Distinct from what? The answer, I think, is: Distinct from everything, i.e. a separate entity in himself. The argument is a bit involved, but all that Ashʿarī seems to mean is: The evidence of wisdom in a work is proof that he who made the work has knowledge; but it is not, in itself, a proof that his knowledge is distinct from him. The latter is a further inference. In the case of God, according to Ashʿarī, such an inference is simply impossible, since it would destroy the divine unity. In man knowledge is an accident, but God's knowledge cannot be an accident. On the other hand — and this creates the real difficulty — Ashʿarī did not hold that the divine knowledge is identified with the divine essence, that God *is* His knowledge. This is explicitly denied in N° 25. In the *Lumaʿ*, then, we find both elements of the classic phrase in which Ashʿarī's

things can be somehow separate from the other. Hence, since there is solid proof of the eternity both of the Creator and of His knowledge, it is impossible for them to be two distinct things. Furthermore, if one could claim that the work of wisdom proves that the knower is knowing and his knowledge is known subsequently, another could claim that the work of wisdom proves that the knowledge is knowledge and it is known to belong to a knower subsequently. If this be impossible — and the two assertions are equal — the proof that the knower is knowing must also be a proof of knowledge.

21. Objection: The work of wisdom proves the knowledge of the knower only because he is one subject to death and ignorance. ([17])

A. If one may say this, then one may also claim that the work of wisdom proves that the knower is knowing because he is one who may die and be ignorant.

22. The assertion that the work of wisdom's proof of the knowledge of a human knower is a proof that the knowledge is distinct from the knower and that it is temporally produced is also refuted by the fact that the knower is knowing because

doctrine on the divine attributes was summed up: « They are not God, and they are not other than God ». Cf. *Irshād*, 137 — (And among God's names are some which are not to be identified with Him, and yet are not distinct from Him, viz. every designation which indicates an eternal attribute, e.g. the Knowing and the Powerful). Averroes found this doctrine as distasteful as that of the Trinity — *Teologia*, 249; and *Tafsīr mā baʿd al-ṭabīʿa*, ed. Bouyges, 1620, 4 ff.

(17) The Muʿtazila held that to predicate knowledge of God is simply to deny that He is ignorant. This objection, then, seems to mean that a work of wisdom proves that its agent has a knowledge only in the case of an agent subject to accidents such as death and (acquired) knowledge. But since God is His own knowledge and life, His wise works cannot be a proof of His having a knowledge which is distinct from Him. If this be the real meaning of the difficulty, Ashʿarī's retort is not very convincing.

of knowledge and not because of « otherness » or temporal production. So the proof that the knower is knowing must also be a proof of knowledge. (18) Knowledge is not knowledge because it is distinct from the knower or because it is temporally produced by reason of the existence of something distinct which is not knowledge and of a producer who is not knowledge. Hence the proof that knowledge is knowledge need not be a proof that it is temporally produced or that it is distinct from the knower. (19) Moreover, if one may claim that the proof that knowledge is knowledge is also a proof of its temporal production, or a proof that it is distinct from the knower, then another may claim that the proof that the knower is knowing is also a proof of his temporal production and of his being distinct in his essence. (20)

23. The proof that God has a power and a life is like the proof that God has a knowledge.

24. God has said: « He has sent it down with His (21) knowledge » (4.166/164); and: « No female conceives or bears save with His knowledge » (35.11/12). Thus God affirmed knowledge of Himself. And God has said: « Did they then not see that God, Who created them, is far more powerful than them? » (41.15/14) Thus He affirmed power of Himself.

25. Among the proofs that God is knowing by a knowledge is the fact that He must be knowing either by Himself or by a knowledge which cannot be Himself. Now if He were

(18) Ashʿarī seems to beg the question here. Surely the Muʿtazila would distinguish: proof of knowledge which is not the one knowing — in the case of man, yes; in the case of God, no.

(19) We must remember that Ashʿarī is trying to maintain the two elements of his doctrine — which seemingly are contradictory.

(20) This last phrase is not very clear to me. Perhaps it is only a dialectical exaggeration.

(21) The phrase may also be translated: « with knowledge of Himself ». So Bell.

knowing by Himself, He Himself would have to be knowledge. For if one said that God is knowing by a quality distinct from Him, he would have to say that this quality is knowledge. But knowledge cannot be knowing, nor can the knower be knowledge, nor can God be identified with His attributes. Do you not see that the way in which one knows that knowledge is knowledge is that by it the knower knows? For the power of man, by which he does not know, cannot be knowledge. Hence, since the Creator cannot be knowledge, He cannot be knowing by Himself. And if that be impossible, it is certain that He is knowing by a knowledge which cannot be Himself.

26. Q. Why do you deny that the Creator is knowing neither by Himself nor by a quality which cannot be Himself? (22)

A. If this were possible, it would be possible for our saying « knowing » to refer neither to Himself nor to a quality, and by it there would be no affirmation either of Himself or of a quality which cannot be Himself. Since this is impossible, what they say is false.

This proof also proves the affirmation of all God's essential attributes, such as life, power, hearing, sight, and the other essential attributes.

(22) This question may involve the distinction mentioned in *Nādir*, I, 58-9. Abuʾl-Hudhail (and the Muʿtazila) were careful to say: « God is knowing by His essence, not by a knowledge », and not: « God is knowing by a knowledge which is His essence ». Otherwise it would seem to represent the view of anti-kalāmists (Ḥanbalites?) who were ready to cry a pox on both houses, Ashʿarism and Muʿtazilism.

CHAPTER TWO

DISCUSSION OF THE QUR'AN AND THE DIVINE WILL

27. Q. Why do you hold that God has been ever speaking and that the speech of God is uncreated? (1)

A. We hold that because God has said: « When we will a thing our only utterance is that we say to it 'Be!', and it is » (16.40/42). So if the Qur'ān had been created, God wonld have said to it « Be! » But the Qur'ān in His speech, and it is impossible that His speech be spoken to. For this would necessitate a second speech, and we should have to say of this second speech and its relation to a third speech what we say of the first speech and its relation to a second speech. But this would necessitate speeches without end — which is false. (2) And if this be false, it is false that the Qur'ān is

(1) This chapter is chiefly concerned with the famous question: Is the Qur'ān the created or the uncreated speech of God? Here are a few references: *Irshād*, 98-129; *Justo Medio*, 182-199; *Teologia*, 245-7; *Ḥillī*, 25-8; *Nādir*, I, 103-111; Watt, *Early Discussions about the Qur'ān*, The Muslim World, XL (1950) 27-40, and 96-105; Patton, *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and the Miḥna*, Leyden, 1897.

(2) The impossibility of such an antecedently eternal series seems to have been accepted by Ash'arī on Qur'ānic grounds: cf. *Risāla*, N° 16. But there is a suggestion of a more philosophical reason at the end of N° 13 of the *Risāla*. It does not seem to have occurred to Ash'arī that one might distinguish (rationally) between an antecedently infinite series of finite causes with no Uncreated Cause, and an antecedently infinite series of created beings.

created. Moreover, if God could speak to His own speech, He could also will His own willing — a thing which both we and they hold to be false. And if this be false, it cannot be that the Qur'ān is created.

28. Q. Why do you deny that God's words « that we say to it 'Be!', and it is » mean that He creates the thing and it is, and not that He actually says anything to it?

A. God said: « When we will a thing our only utterance is that we say to it 'Be!', and it is.» Now if one could maintain that God does not really say to a thing « Be! », and that His words mean only that He creates the thing, and it is, then another could claim that God does not really will a thing, and that « we will a thing » means only « we make a thing » without any implication of real willing.

29. O. The meaning of God's willing the thing is that He makes it. (3) Thus He really wills it in the sense that He makes it.

A. If the speaker may say this, then someone else may claim that God really says « Be! » to the thing and that this means that He creates it. Thus he would affirm of God a real speech which would be the « spoken to », just as you claim that God has a real willing which is the thing He wills. And if one may claim this, another may say that God's knowledge of the thing is His making of it.

30. O. Has God not said: « a wall threatening (4) to collapse » (18.77/76)? Now the wall really had no will, but God said « threatening » in a wide sense, the meaning being that the wall was about to collapse.

A. That is so.

(3) *Nādir*, II, 91.

(4) Arabic: *yurīdu* — which verb means « to will ».

Q. Then why do you deny that the words « that we say to it 'Be !' » mean « that we create it, and it is » ?

A. The difference therein is that an inert thing cannot will so long as it retains its inertness, whereas it is not impossible for the Creator really to will or to speak. Therefore His words « that we say to it 'Be !' and it is » do not mean that He creates it. Moreover, if His words « that we say to it » did not mean the affirmation of His speaking to the thing but signified only that He creates it, just as His words « a wall threatening to collapse » mean that it was about to collapse, then it could be claimed that God's words « we will a thing » mean « we make it » and that He does not really will its making, just as His words « a wall threatening to collapse » mean that it was about to collapse. In fact this accords even better with the real meaning of the comparison. So if this be not necessary, neither is what you have said.

31. One should also say to them : Let us suppose that God's willing the making of a thing means that He makes it, and that His willing the movement of a thing means that He moves it. Why, then, do you deny that the inert thing really wills it own movement in the sense that it is moving ? And why deny that the Creator is not superior to the inert thing in willing, and that He is not superior to one whose act takes place without his willing it ? For the latter acquires the quality of « acting » just as the Creator does.

32. Q. What, then, is the meaning of God's words : « They replied : We are coming obediently » (41.11/10) ?

A. They mean that the two of them really said : « We are coming obediently. » (5)

(5) This seems to contradict the principle which he follows in N° 30. But there may have been some special reason for this devotion to the letter in what seems clearly to be a figurative expression.

33. Here is an analogical (6) proof that God has ever been speaking. Had God ever been not-speaking — and He is one for whom speech is not impossible — He would have been qualified by one of the contraries of speech, such as silence or some ailment. And if He had ever been qualified by a contrary of speech, that contrary of speech would have been eternal. And if that contrary of speech had been eternal, it would have been impossible for it to cease to exist and for the Creator to speak ; for the eternal cannot cease to exist, just as it cannot begin to exist. So the Creator would have had to be not-speaking, not-commanding, and not-prohibiting in any way whatever. Now both they and we hold this to be false. So if this be false, it is true and certain that the Creator has ever been speaking and saying.

34. Q. And why do you claim that if the Creator had ever been not-speaking He would have been qualified by some contrary of speech ?

A. One who is living, if he be not qualified by speech, is qualified by its contrary, just as, if he be not qualified by knowledge, he is qualified by its contrary. That is so because among us one who is living is always such, and there is no sound proof that the invisible world (7) contains anyone who is living and at the same time devoid both of speech and of its contraries, just as there is no sound proof of anyone living who is devoid both of knowledge and of its contraries so that he can be described neither as knowing nor by some contrary of knowledge. The same features are common to both cases : that a man cannot be living and neither knowing

(6) Arabic : *min al-qiyās*. *Qiyās* means : comparison, or analogy, then reasoning, and syllogism. In Ash'arī it is still a « raisonnement à deux termes » — cf. GAI, 358-363, and 365-7.

(7) Arabic : *al-ghāʾib* — the absent, remote, hidden, i.e. what does not fall under our direct experience and perception. It is opposed to : *ftmā bainanā*, and to *al-shāhid waʾl-wujūd*.

nor qualified by some contrary of knowledge; and that a man cannot be living and neither speaking nor qualified by some contrary of speech; and that there is no sound proof of that in the invisible world. So if one of the two were possible, namely a living man who is neither speaking nor qualified by some contrary of speech, then the other would be possible, namely a living man who is neither knowing nor qualified by some contrary of knowledge.

35. Moreover it is impossible for a human knower to be qualified by a contrary of knowledge so long as he knows, or for a human speaker to be qualified by a contrary of speech so long as he speaks. Since both these cases are equally impossible, he who allows, in the invisible world, a speaker qualified by some contrary of speech at the same time that he is speaking must be like one who allows, in the invisible world, a knower qualified by some contrary of knowledge at the same time that he knows. Similarly, then, since the impossibility of there being a living man who is neither knowing nor qualified by some contrary of knowledge compels us to acknowledge the impossibility of there being a living man who is neither speaking nor qualified by some contrary of speech, the same impossibility must apply to the invisible world. ([8]) So one who

(8) The obvious retort is that a living man has the organs of speech, tongue, mouth, larynx, etc., whereas God has none of these material things. But the matter is not as simple as that. Ashʿarī held firmly that God has two hands, two eyes, and a face — but *bilā kaifa*, without asking how (Maqālat Creed, 8-10). So he might have applied the same formula to the present case. Or his answer might have been based on his concept of « speech ». Al-Juwainī says that Ashʿarī defined speech as « that which entails that its subject (*maḥall*) be speaking » — *Irshād*, 101. Al-Juwainī himself prefers the definition: « the saying (*al-qawl*) residing in the soul... which is indicated by means of expressions and conventional signs ». This is almost the same as Bāqillānī's definition, *Inṣāf*, 94. 11 ff. It is possible that Ashʿarī himself had some such notion of *kalām nafsī*.

allows one of the two things in the invisible world must be like one who allows the other.

36. This is also the proof that God has ever been willing. For if one who is living wills nothing whatever, he must be qualified by one of the contraries of willing, namely such defects as unmindfulness, aversion, and so forth, just as, if one who is living knows nothing at all, he must be qualified by one of the contraries of knowledge, namely such defects as ignorance, unmindfulness, neglect, death, and similar defects. Now it is impossible for the Creator to have ever been qualified by some contrary of willing, because this would have necessitated His never willing anything in any way whatever. This is so because, had the Creator ever been qualified by some contrary of willing, the latter would have had to be eternal — and it is impossible for the eternal to cease to exist, just as it is impossible for it to begin to exist. So the impossibility of the contrary's non-existence would have necessitated the Creator's never willing or intending to make anything in any way whatever — which is false. And if that be false, it is true and certain that the Creator has ever been willing.

37. ([9]) Q. Why do you say that one who has ever been not-speaking and not-willing must be qualified by some contrary of willing and speech, provided he be one for whom speech and willing are not impossible? And why, then, do you deny that one who has ever been not-acting must be qualified by the contrary of acting and must ever have been omitting to act?

A. Your objection is not compelling. For speech has a contrary which is not speech, ([10]) and willing has a con-

(9) In Nos 37-44 Ashʿarī answers various objections which claim to be based on his own principle: the absence of a perfection in a subject capable of that perfection necessitates the presence of some contrary of that perfection.

(10) e. g. silence, dumbness, etc.

trary which is not willing (11). So if the Creator were living, but not-speaking and not-willing, He would have to be qualified by the contrary of speech and willing. But acting has no contrary which is not-acting, so that the denial of the agent's being acting would necessitate the existing of its contrary. For if something existing is not temporally produced, it is eternal; and the eternal is not contrary to produced things (12). Hence since acting has no contrary which is not-acting, the denial of God's having been ever acting does not necessitate the affirmation of a contrary. But since speech has a contrary which is not speech, the denial of God's having been ever speaking does undoubtedly necessitate affirming that contrary of Him.

38. O. If the Eternal had been ever not-acting, He must have been either impotent or omitting to act.

A. Impotence is not contrary to acting. For there is no genus of acting — be it motion, rest, or some other accident — which God cannot create along with impotence. (13) By that, therefore, we know that impotence is not contrary to acting, because bodies and atoms are among the things produced by the acts of God. We know, then, that impotence is not contrary to acting; for if my impotence were contrary to my effecting motion, it would be contrary to my Lord's causing

(11) e. g. aversion, inadvertence, etc.

(12) Perhaps the point here is that God's « acting » is the production of something in time, i.e. something *muḥdath* (cf. n. 5, Ch. 1). Since the *muḥdath* is temporal, God's « acting » is also temporal, and so can have no contrary in God, who is eternal. Ashʿarī seems to have held that God's active attributes (those concerned with His operations ad extra, like creation, sustenance, etc.) were entitatively temporal, but denominatively eternal. Thus, God was eternally « creator », but not eternally « creating », just as a weaver is a weaver even when he is not actually weaving. Cf. *al-Rawḍat al-Bahiyya*, Hyderabad, 1322, pp. 39 ff.

(13) Not, of course, with regard to the same accident — i.e. a body could not be simultaneously moving and unable to move. The pertinence of this is open to question.

motion to take place in my body. (14) Do you not see that, if it be impossible for me to effect knowledge in myself when I am dead, it is also impossible for my Lord to effect knowledge in me when I am dead? Hence, since impotence is not contrary to acting, but only to power, and since omitting a thing is doing its contrary, (15) even though the Creator was not ever effecting anything in any way, the denial of His having been ever acting does not necessitate His having been ever impotent or omitting to act.

39. Moreover, if one who is living be not-speaking and not-willing, he must be qualified by some contrary of willing and speech; but if he be not-acting, it is not necessary to affirm a contrary which is impotence or omitting to act, since the man's impotence is not contrary to his acting. So the denial that God has been ever acting does not necessitate the affirmation of an omitting to act or an impotence in the same way that the denial of His having been ever speaking and willing necessitates the affirmation of their contraries.

40. O. Then the denial that God has been ever moving necessitates His having been ever quiescent.

A. If God were one capable of moving, the denial of His motion would certainly necessitate His being quiescent just as the denial of His having been ever speaking and willing necessitates the affirmation of their contraries — since He is one for whom speech and willing are not impossible.

41. O. Then the denial that God has been ever generous necessitates His having been ever miserly.

(14) i.e. so long as I am impotent with respect to motion. But in thus dealing with accidents it would seem that Ashʿarī lays himself open to the charge that God's « acting » is also an accident.

(15) This definition of « omitting a thing » seems rather arbitrary. It would be verified in the world of accidents — e.g. if a body is not moving it is quiescent, and if it is not white it is some other color, etc. But there is no place in God for accidents.

A. Generosity is something which the generous one is free to exercise or not. But miserliness is had only when the miser denies a claim which he ought to acknowledge. (16) The Creator, however, is not bound to do anything.

42. O. Then the denial that God has been ever just necessitates His having been ever unjust or impotent.

A. The denial of justice does not necessitate a contrary which is impotence or injustice; for there is no genus of justice which God cannot effect in us along with impotence. So the denial of justice does not necessitate the affirmation of a contrary which is impotence. Nor does it necessitate the affirmation of injustice, because a man may not be just, when there proceeds from him no justice acquired or effected by him, and yet not be unjust. Hence, of him of whom we deny justice we do not affirm a contrary which is injustice or impotence—since we may deny it of ourselves without affirming a contrary which is impotence or injustice. But if one who is living, among us or others, is not knowing, he is qualified by some contrary of knowledge. Moreover, a man may not be just, and yet not be unjust by reason of some injustice belonging to the genus of the justice. So the denial of justice does not necessitate a contrary which is injustice with the same necessity that is present in the case of speech and willing. For a man may be just by being in a place, if God has commanded him to be in it; and at another time he may be unjust by being in that place, if God has forbidden him to be there. In such a case the justice would belong to the genus of the injustice, because being in a place belongs to the genus of being in it.

43. Q. If the Creator has not been eternally moving something, why do you deny that He has been eternally keeping something at rest ?

(16) The Arabic word usually translated by « miserliness » also means « refusing something to another », cf. SDA, s.v. *bakhala*.

A. When you say that if He has not been moving something He has been keeping something at rest you must mean one of two things. Either you mean: If He has not been eternally moving Himself, He has been eternally keeping Himself at rest. Or you mean: If He has not been keeping some body in motion, He has been keeping it at rest. Now if you mean: If He has not been keeping Himself in motion, He has been keeping Himself at rest — why this is an error, because God cannot move Himself. And we did not say that if one does not speak who cannot speak, he is qualified by some contrary of speech. On the other hand, if you mean: If he has not been eternally keeping some body in motion, He has been eternally keeping it at rest — why no bodies eternally coexisted with God so that, if He were not keeping them in motion, He must have been keeping them at rest. What did not exist could not move. So if He did not move what could not move, He did not have to be keeping it at rest.

QUESTION

44. O. One of us who has the power to speak may be devoid both of speech and of its contraries even while he has the power to speak.

A. This is something with wich we cannot agree. For one of us who has the power to speak, at the very moment that he has this power, *is* speaking, no doubt about it ! We shall prove that further on in this book (17). However, we now say to this objector: Why do you deny that one who has the power to know may be devoid both of knowledge and of its contraries ? He may say: One who has the power to know may be devoid of the knowledge and the contrary over which he has power, and still not be devoid of another knowledge or

(17) He refers to the discussion of the « capacity » in Chapter Six.

its contrary. We reply: Then say that one who has power over speech and its contrary may be devoid of both, but not devoid of another speech or its contrary over which he has no power!

45. Another proof that God has been eternally speaking is that speech must be either eternal or temporally produced. So if God's speech be temporally produced, then God produces it either in Himself, or as self-subsistent, (18), or in another. But God cannot produce it in Himself, because He is not a substrate (19) for produced things. And He cannot produce it as self-subsistent, because it is an attribute, and an attribute cannot subsist in itself. And He cannot produce it in another, for if He were to produce it in another, the body containing the speech would have to derive from the most distinctive quality of the speech a name for the speech itself and a name for the whole to which the locus (20) of the speech would belong. So if the most distinctive quality of the speech were its being «speech», that body would have to be «speaking»; and if its most distinctive quality were its being «command», that body would have to be «commanding», and similarly, if its most distinctive

(18) Arabic: *qāʾiman binafsihi*, which seems to be the equivalent of the scholastic « per se stans ». The disjunction is complete, if one assumes that God is speaking. From the rational standpoint the conclusion is that God has no « speech », unless Ashʿarī is prepared to explain more precisely the nature of a divine attribute, and the nature of the distinction between God's essence and His attributes. If the latter is a mystery to be accepted on faith, it must be shown that the mystery has been revealed and is not a mere yielding to the demands of a questionable analogy.

(19) Arabic: *maḥall*. Perhaps « substrate » is too technical a translation. The ordinary meaning « place » might do, or, even better, « subject ». Literally *maḥall* is a place where a person, or thing, *descends*.

(20) Also *maḥall*. The argument may seem a bit involved, but is simply this: If speech is found in A, then only A can be said to be « speaking » by that speech, and one cannot say that God is speaking thereby.

quality were its being « prohibition », that body would have to be « prohibiting ». Hence, since another cannot speak by God's speech, or command by His commanding, or prohibit by His prohibiting, God cannot produce speech in another in such wise that He Himself would be speaking thereby. Therefore, since it is impossible to allow the alternatives of which one would have to be realized if God's speech were temporally produced, it is certain that God's speech is eternal, and that by it God has ever been speaking.

46. Q. May not God produce in another an act, a favor, a bounty, a benefit, and a sustenance, so that He Himself is thereby acting, generous, bountiful, benefiting, and sustaining? Why, then, do you deny that He may produce in another a speech by which He Himself would be speaking?

A. If this were binding, then God would have to know and be powerful by the knowledge and power which He produces in another, just as He is generous and gracious and bountiful by what He produces in another as favor and bounty and benefit and sustenance. So if this be not binding, neither is your assertion. Moreover, when God produces in another a favor, bounty, act, benefit, and sustenance, that body is qualified by the most distinctive quality of the act, generosity, sustenance, bounty, and benefit. For if the favor, bounty, benefit, and act be «power», that body must be « powerful »; and the same would be true if it were knowledge, or life, or willing, or hearing, or seeing. So when God created speech in another, that other would have to derive a name from the most distinctive quality of the speech. But since that is impossible, (21) it is false for you to make speech the object

(21) What is impossible? Not what he has just said, though the text seems to give that impression. If the text is to be retained as it is, I presume that Ashʿarī really has in mind the impossibility of the comparison instituted by the objector. God is called bountiful when He bestows a bounty, e.g. power. But the recipient of the bounty is

of such a comparison, i. e. that God produces His speech in another just as He produces His act, favor, bounty and benefit in another.

47. Q. May not God produce writing in another, and yet the thing in which the writing subsists will not be writing ? (22)

A. If God produces in another a necessary writing, that other is writing of necessity ; and similarly, if the writing be an acquisition, that other is writing by acquisition. So if God were to produce His speech in another, that other would have to be speaking by the speech of God.

48. This proof of the eternity of God's speech is also the proof of the eternity of God's willing. For if His willing were temporally produced, it would have to be produced by God either in Himself, or in another, or as self-subsistent. But God cannot produce it in Himself, because He is not a substrate for produced things ; and He cannot produce it as self-subsistent, because it is an attribute, and an attribute cannot subsist in itself — just as God cannot produce a knowledge and a power subsisting in themselves ; and He cannot produce it in another, because this would make it necessary for that other to be willing by God's willing. Therefore, since it is impossible to allow these alternatives of which one would have to be realized if God's willing were temporally produced, it is certain that God's willing is eternal, and that by it God has ever been willing.

not therefore bountiful, but powerful. Another suggestion : read « when God created His speech (*kalāmahu*) in another ».

(22) There seems to be some confusion here between writing as an act and writing as something written.

CHAPTER THREE

DISCUSSION OF THE DIVINE WILLING AND ITS EMBRACING ALL TEMPORALLY PRODUCED THINGS (1)

49. Q. Why do you maintain that God wills everything which can be willed ? (2)

A. We maintain this because the divine willing being one of God's essential attributes, as we have already proved, must embrace everything which can truly be willed, just as the divine knowledge, being one of God's essential attributes, must embrace everything which can truly be known. (3) Moreover, it has already been proved that God is the creator of everything which begins to be — and He cannot

(1) *Ibāna*, (Klein) 100-106 ; *Inṣāf*, 139-149 ; *Irshād*, 216-232 ; *Fyzee*, 33-35. This question of the divine will is bound up with the questions to be discussed in Chapters 5-7 of the *Luma‘*. The adversaries (Mu‘tazila) denied that God could will evil or folly.

(2) The question must be understood as referring, not to everything which can be willed, but to those things which can be and de facto are willed.

(3) The parallel must be understood in the sense indicated in the previous note. While God actually knows everything knowable, He does not actually will everything which He can will ; but everything that is willed, is willed by Him Perhaps it is this distinction which Ash‘arī means to express by the phrase *‘alā ḥaqīqa* — which I have translated by « truly » ; it could also be « really », « in reality », or even « as it really is », if *‘alā ḥaqīqatihi* is the better reading.

create what He does not will. God Himself has said: «Effective doer of what He wills» (85.16 and 11.107/109). Furthermore, there cannot be in God's dominion anything which He does not will. For if there were in God's dominion something not willed by Him, one of two things would have to follow: either the affirmation of unmindfulness and neglect, or the affirmation of weakness, impotence, feebleness, and failure to attain His desire. Since such things cannot be said of God, there cannot be in His dominion anything which He does not will.

50. Q. And why do you claim that?

A. If what is willed takes place, he whose desire (4) takes place is not overtaken by weakness or by failure to attain his desire because of the occurrence of the thing willed. But if what a man wills does not take place, he must be overtaken by weakness and failure to attain his desire. Do you not see that when what a man knows takes place he is not overtaken by ignorance or by one of the contraries of the knowledge of that thing, since it takes place and he knows it? This proves that if the thing does not take place, and he does not know it, he must be ignorant or qualified by some contrary of knowledge. Similarly. if what he wills takes place, he must not be qualified by unmindfulness, or weakness, or feebleness, or failure to attain his desire; but if something which he does not will takes place, he must be qualified by unmindfulness, or weakness, or feebleness, or failure to attain his desire.

51. Moreover, if the taking place of what God does not will of those actions of His which we are agreed are His actions would necessitate unmindfulness, neglect, weaknesss, feebleness, and failure to attain His desire, then, when there takes place some action of another which He does not will, He must be bound by the same necessity as that which would arise from the unwilled taking place of one of those actions which

(4) Arabic: *murād* — i.e. «willed», or «the thing willed».

we are agreed are His actions. If one who claims that there is some action of God which He does not know is bound to attribute to God ignorance or one of the contraries of knowledge, do you not see that the same obligation constrains one who claims that there is some action of another which God does not know? Likewise, if one who claims that God announces that there will be some act of His which in fact will not be is bound to attribute lying to God, then one who claims that God announces that there will be some act of another which in fact will not be is also bound to attribute lying to God. In this respect there is no difference between what we are agreed is God's act and that which proceeds from another. Similarly, then, if the taking place of an act of His which the Creator does not will would necessitate His weakness and failure to attain His desire or His unmindfulness and neglect, the same would be necessitated by the taking place of another's act unwilled by Him.

52. Furthermore, it has already been proved that all temporally produced things are created by God. (5) Hence, if the Creator cannot do what He does not will, there cannot proceed from another what He does not will — since all the things which proceed from others are acts of God.

(5) Strictly speaking Ashʿarī has not proved this in this work. He holds, of course, that God is the Creator of everything outside Himself, and, as he goes on to say, that exerything which proceeds from creatures is an act of God, i.e. God's doing. For an explicit discussion of God as *sole* Creator, cf. *Inṣāf*, 127-139. We must remember that the *Lumaʿ* is not intended as a thorough discussion of every single point of dogma. It is also worth remarking that Ashʿarī's adversaries may not always have had precisely the same understanding of a given term as he had. An example of this is the term «creation» (*khalq*), particularly as applied to human acts — cf. *Watt*, 84, and n. 113. One also thinks of the rather absurd verbal rigidity involved in the Ashʿarite rejection of the Christians' predicating «substance» of God — cf. *Tamhīd*, 78.21-81.7.

53. Moreover, if there were in the world something unwilled by God, it would be something to the existence of which He would be averse. (6). And if there were something to the existence of which He was averse, it would be something the existence of which He would refuse. This would necessitate the conclusion that sins exist, God willing or God refusing. But this is the description of one who is weak and dominated — and our Lord is very far above that!

54. O. Tell us about the case of a king of this world who passes by a blind and paralyzed cripple and is cursed by him, though the king does not will that the man should curse him: do you hold that in this case the king is overtaken by weakness, feebleness, and failure to attain his desire, since he wills that the man should not curse him, and yet he does curse him?

A. Certainly. And if the paralytic's will to curse had not been realized and the king's desire for praise had been fulfilled, that would have all the more forcibly diverted any suspicion of weakness and feebleness on the king's part. But if the king did not will to be cursed by the blind cripple, and if he had warned the latter not to curse him and had refused to allow it (7), and yet the man cursed the king without regard for the king's desire or disapproval — why this is the very description of weakness and feebleness. Moreover, when someone wills something from us and it is, and when he does not will it, it is not, he deserves to be described as « having power » much more than one who wills the being of what will not be, and the not-being of what will be. And the

(6) The completeness of this disjunction is questionable. Ash'arī himself allows that « willing » may have other contraries besides « aversion ». Here he is probably influenced by his concept of God as sole Creator.

(7) This is an addition to the original objection.

Lord of the Worlds is not to be described save in the way which best accords with the attribute « having power ».

55. O. If one wills a thing and it is, and wills it not and it is not, his « having power » (8) is due only to those who follow and help him, and his weakness is due to the fewness of his helpers and followers. But the Lord of the Worlds cannot be numerically increased by the addition of anyone.

A. If what you claim be true, why do you deny that one who wills the being of an act of his which in fact will not be and the not-being of one which in fact will be is worthier of the description « having power » than one who wills the being of what will be and the not-being of what will not be? For the former can be described as « having power » only because he is one who can be helped by others in his act. So his « having power » must be due to him who helps him, and his weakness to him who refrains from helping him. (9)

56. One should also say to them: Why do you claim that one who wills from us the being of what in fact will be can be described as « having power » only because he is strong by reason of the many who help him, and weak because of the many who refrain from helping him? They may say: Because this is so among us. We reply: Then in like manner the work of wisdom proves that he from whom it proceeds is knowing and powerful only because he is one who knows by a knowledge

(8) Arabic: *iqtidār*. It may mean « having power », or « being enabled ». It would seem that the objector has the latter meaning in mind. The objection itself appears to be rather fatuous, but we must not be hasty in judging cases like this, where the terms used may have a background (and even a meaning) which we cannot fully appreciate.

(9) This answer is not crystal clear. If the text and my translation are accurate, I suggest that « having power » must be understood in the second sense mentioned in the previous note, i.e. having power because one is enabled, or helped, by another or others.

and is powerful by a power — for such, among us, do we find him to be who is proved by works of wisdom to be knowing and powerful. Why, then, do you deny that, according to your argument, the works must not prove that the Creator is powerful and knowing? Thus they should be opposed by the argument that the works of wisdom prove that he from whom they proceed is knowing and powerful because he is one who has a knowledge and a power — for that is so among us. (10)

57. Q. Why do you deny that the Creator would not be overtaken by weakness, feebleness, and failure to attain His desire, because He can force His creatures to do what He wants them to do?

A. According to your principle the Creator wills that creatures should believe only in virtue of an obedience for which they will deserve to be rewarded. (11) But if He forced them to believe, according to you they would be neither obedient nor deserving of reward. And just as the taking place of what He did not will would entail weakness, feebleness, and failure to attain His desire, if He did not possess the power to force them to it, so He would have to be qualified by weakness, feebleness, and failure to attain His desire, if He willed its taking place in a way which it would be beyond the scope of His power to effect.

58. Moreover, if he who could believe could also disbelieve, the Qadariyya (12) would be bound to hold that the

(10) This use of the retort is a feature of Ashʿarī's dialectic which is often apt to disconcert the reader. But its inconclusiveness did not seem to bother him.

(11) It is clear that the main issue in this chapter is the relation between the divine will and human acts. I use the phrase « human acts » in opposition to « acts of man » (actus humani— actus hominis). The former are voluntary, or those which we commonly regard as free; the latter are involuntary.

(12) This is the first time that Ashʿarī names his adversaries. Cf. art. Ḳadarīya, in EI or Hwb. Here the name is doubtless synonomous

Creator does not possess the power to do that which, were He to effect it, creatures would undoubtedly believe. (13) For according to the Qadariyya creatures can disbelieve even when signs come down which compel belief, just as they can believe before that happens. And when a man can disbelieve, even when a sign comes down, there is no guarantee that he will not do so. Furthermore, if an act of man could take place, unwilled by the Creator, without the Creator's being thereby overtaken by feebleness or weakness, because He can force the man to do it, then an unwilled act of the Creator Himself could take place without His being thereby overtaken by weakness or failure to attain His desire, because He can make it take place and can create it. If this cannot be, and if the taking place of an unwilled act of God would necessitate His being weak and feeble, the same must be true regarding the acts of His creatures.

59. Q. Why do you deny that, although the taking place of an unwilled act of a man must be attributed to the man's unmindfulness or to his weakness and feebleness, that is not necessarily so regarding the taking place of the act of a second man which the first does not will — and that the same must be true of the Eternal?

A. The matter is not as you suppose, but the story regarding the man's own act and that of another is the same. For when an unwilled act of a man takes place, it must be the result of unmindfulness, or weakness and feebleness, or failure to attain his desire. And the same must be said of a second man's act which the first does not will, for if it is not

with Muʿtazila, since they are called by the latter name in N° 61. There is a splendid article on the Muʿtazila (s.v.) by Nyberg in EI and and Hwb. The reader may also consult the works mentioned in my Introduction.

(13) Ashʿarī of course held the contrary. Cf. Chapter Seven, infra.

the result of unmindfulness, it must be the result of weakness and failure to attain his desire. That is so because the reason which enforces the man's weakness and failure to attain his desire, when he knows what proceeds from him but does not will it, is that what he wills does not take place and that he did not will what does take place. For if what he wills takes place, he is not overtaken by weakness or feebleness; but if it does not take place, he is overtaken by feebleness and failure to attain his desire, because it proceeds from him while he knows it but does not will it. So if the reason be what we have mentioned, the same must also be true concerning what proceeds from a second man when the first does not will it. For if the reason why A must be qualified by the contrary of the knowledge of what proceeds from himself is that it proceeds from him without his knowing it, the same must be true of A in relation to what proceeds from B without A's knowing it, since the same reason applies. And the same must be said of willing. Moreover, if something proceeds from B which A does not will, then A has already disapproved of it (14); and if A has dissapproved of its existence, then he has refused it. This necessitates that the thing was, regardless of whether A willed it or refused it — which is the very description of weakness and feebleness.

60. Q. Why do you deny that all that is required of God in connection with acts of His creatures which He does not will is that He be averse to them, and that this entails neither weakness nor feebleness ?

A. On the contrary the occurrence of those acts of theirs when God was averse to them would undoubtedly entail

(14) Ashʿarī apparently ignores the possibility that A's «not willing» may not be quite the same as «disapproving». I do not know what the full position of the Qadariyya was, but the verbal manœuvring of Ashʿarī seems to leave much to be desired.

weakness and feebleness. For when something occurs, to the existence of which God was averse, there exists something the existence of which He refused. And if there exists something the existence of which He refused, then it exists regardless of whether God willed it or refused it. This enforces the conclusion that the thing is, regardless of whether God willed it or refused it — which is the very description of weakness.

61. Moreover, the Muʿtazila entertain two opinions. Some maintain that God's will respecting the acts of His creatures is His commanding them. Others hold that God's will respecting the acts of His creatures imposes no obligation and is not His commanding them. Now he who maintains that God's will is His command is bound, since the Creator does not command the acts of infants and madmen, to maintain that God abhors those acts — if the denial of the willing of creatures' acts entails abhorrence of them. But God abhors only disobedience, just as He forbids only disobedience. So if these Muʿtazila do not hold this to be true of the acts of infants and madmen, what they say is false. Besides, if God's not commanding what can be commanded must mean that He abhors it, those who were contemporaries of the Apostle — since it was possible in his time for God to reveal the prohibition of something "permitted" (15) which is not an act of obedience — would have had to conclude, in the absence of an explicit command of God, that God abhorred the "permitted". But this would enforce the conclusion that everything "permitted" is disobedience.

62. As for him who follows the second opinion — and it is the opinion of al-Jubbāʾī (16) — namely, that God's will

(15) Arabic: *al-mubāḥ* — the permitted, or indifferent; one of the five legal categories. Cf., for example, M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Muslim Institutions*, 69, or, Schacht, art. Sharīʿa, in EI or Hwb.

(16) The elder Jubbāʾī, with whom Ashʿarī was so long asso-

respecting the acts of His creatures is not His commanding them, one should say to him: If the denial that God wills the acts of His creatures entails His abhorrence of them, then tell us: Does God will the existence of those acts which are neither acts of disobedience nor acts of obedience? If he replies affirmatively, one should say to him: You must say that they are acts of obedience, for you hold that obedience is obedience to the one obeyed simply because he wills it. But if he answers that God does not will them, one should say to him: Then you must say that God abhors their existence. But this necessitates their being acts of disobedience, because what God abhors is disobedience, just as you hold that what He forbids is disobedience. And one should also say to them: If the denial of willing entails the affirmation of abhorrence, then, if God eternally willed nothing at all, you must maintain that He was eternally abhorrent, since the denial of willing entails the affirmation of abhorrence.

QUESTION

63. One should also say to the Muʿtazila: Why do you claim that only one who is foolish wills folly? They may say: Because among us the willer of folly is foolish. One should reply: And likewise among us one who wills what he knows will not be, or thinks it likely that it will not be, is a mere wisher. So judge the same of God, since you claim that He wills the existence of what He knows will not be (17). And one should also say to them: Likewise one who allows his menservants and maidservants to fornicate one with another in his presence when he is not unable to separate them, despite his abhorrence of fornication, according to your principles, and

ciated while he was himself a Muʿtazilite. A summary of his doctrine will be found in *Tritton*, 141-149.

(17) Since, according to the adversaries, He commands obedience though He knows that some men will disobey.

despite his having previously forbidden them to fornicate — such a man is foolish. So judge the same of God; otherwise you are inconsistent.

64. Q. If one who is not foolish could will folly, one who is not a liar could lie.

A. What is the difference between you and one who says: If one who is not a mere wisher could will what he knows will not be, and one who is not foolish could allow his maidservants and menservants to fornicate one with another, despite his abhorrence of fornication, according to you, and despite his power to prevent it and to separate them, then he who is not a liar could lie. They will find no difference in this! And one should also say to them: Just as one of us who wills folly is foolish, so one of us who wills obedience is obedient. Judge the same, then, regarding the invisible world!

65. That God wills everything which can be willed is also shown by His words: « But you shall not will unless God will ». (76.30) Thus He declared that we will only what He wills that we should will. God has also said: « And had thy Lord willed, all on earth would have believed, all of them! » (10.99) And: « And had we willed, we would have given every soul its guidance ». (32.13) And: « And had thy Lord willed, they would not have done it ». (6.112) And: « And had God willed, they would not have fought; but God does what He will ». (2.253/254) Thus He declared that, had He not willed the fight, it would not have taken place, and that what He willed of that, He effected (18).

66. Q. The meaning of « had God willed, they would not have fought » is: Had He wished to prevent their fighting, the fight would not have taken place.

(18) The appeal to the Qurʿān in this (and in the closely related question of the *qadar*, Chapter Five) is not in itself conclusive — cf. MC, 51.

A. Why do you not take the verse literally and say: No matter how He wished that the fight should not take place, it would not have taken place ? And the same query should be addressed to them regarding God's words: « And had thy Lord willed, all on earth would have believed, all of them ! » They may say: Had God wished to force them to believe, they would have believed. One should reply: Could they, then, not disbelieve, despite the forcing, just as they were able to believe ? How, then, by reason of the forcing, would they have had to believe, since they would have been able to withhold their belief, despite the forcing, just as they were able to believe previously when there was no forcing ?

67. Q. The existence of what God does not will entails no weakness, just as the existence of what He has not commanded entails no weakness.

A. His own acts existed, according to you, without His having commanded them, and weakness did not overtake Him; but had they existed without His having willed them, weakness would have overtaken Him. Similarly, then, the existence of what He did not command from another would not entail His weakness; but the existence of what He did not will from another would prove weakness. Moreover, the existence of what He has not commanded, but has forbidden, and yet He has willed its taking place, does not mean that weakness overtakes Him ([19]).

(19) Apparently it also means the denial of human freedom and responsibility. Would Ashʿarī really have admitted this? The question will occur in more pointed form in connection with the doctrine contained in Chapters 5-7.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF THE VISION

68. Q. Why do you say that the Vision of God ([1]) with the eyes is possible from the standpoint of reason ?

A. We say that because what cannot be predicated of the Creator and cannot be true of Him is such because allowing it would involve: 1) the affirmation of His temporal production; 2) or the affirmation of the temporal production of a quality in Him; 3) or likening Him to creatures, or classing Him under a genus, or making some essential alteration in Him; 4) or charging Him with injustice or oppression or lying.

69. 1) The allowability of the Vision involves no affirmation of God's temporal production, for what is seen is not seen because it is temporally produced. If that were the reason why it is seen, our opponents would have to hold that

(1) *Ibāna*, 56-65; *Inṣāf*, 156-171 (a much more developed exposition); *Irshād*, 156-172; *Justo Medio*, 110-126; *Hillt*, 35-37; *Nādir*, I, 112-118. The remarks of Wensinck, MC, 65-66, need some qualification. The Christian « visio beatifica » seems to be *essentially* different from the Ashʿarite vision of God. In the former there is no question of any *ocular* vision of God. In Wensinck's quotation from the *Catholic Encyclopedia* the dropping of a few lines has given a meaning quite contrary to that intended. A fine article on the subject is that of Michel, in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, VII, cc. 2351-2394 — « Intuitive (Vision) ».

every temporally produced thing is seen — and they hold that to be false. Furthermore, if what is seen were seen because of its temporal production, the seer would be a producer of the seen, since it would be seen because of its temporal production.

70. 2) The Vision involves no affirmation of the temporal production of a quality in what is seen, because colors are seen, though there can be no temporal production of a quality in them (2). Moreover, if what is seen were seen because of the temporal production of a quality in it, that quality would have to be the seeing itself. But this would entail that our seeing a dead man would result in the temporal production of seeing in him, and thus seeing would be united with death; and our seeing the blind man's eye would result in the temporal production of seeing in his eye, and thus seeing would be united with blindness. Since that is impossible, what they say is false.

71. 3) The affirmation of the Vision of God involves no likening the Creator to creatures, and no classing Him under a genus (3), and no essential alteration in Him. For we see black and white without their becoming homogeneous or alike because sight falls on them, and without there being any essential change of black to white, or of white to black, because sight falls on them.

72. 4) The Vision involves no charging God with injustice or oppression or lying. For we see the unjust and the oppressor and the liar, and we see him who is not unjust, not an oppressor, and not a liar.

Therefore, since the affirmation of the Vision involves nothing which cannot be predicated of the Creator, the Vision

(2) Because they are accidents, and an accident cannot itself be the subject of another accident.

(3) So that He would be «like» visible creatures. Recall that Ashʿarī denied that God can in any way resemble creatures.

is not impossible (4). And if it be not impossible, it is predicable of God.

73. O. Touching and tasting and smelling involve no affirmation of temporal production or of the temporal production of a quality in the Creator.

A. Some of our associates maintain that touching is one of the kinds of contiguities; and likewise tasting, which is the union of the tongue and uvula with the body which has the taste; and that smelling is the union of the nasal cartilage with what is smelled, at which union the perception of it takes place. And they say that two things which are contiguous are such only because of the temporal production of two contiguities in them. So the affirmation of that would involve the affirmation of the temporal production of a quality in the Creator.

74. And some of our associates say: By his mention of touching and tasting the objector must mean that God produces a perception of Him in these members (5) without producing any quality in Himself, or he must mean the temporal production of a quality in God. If he means the temporal production of a quality in God — why that is something impossible. But if he means the temporal production of a perception in us, that is possible. But the commanding of denomination belongs to God. If He commands us to call it touching and tasting and smelling, we do so; and if He forbids us we forbear. As for hearing, our associates do not differ over it, but all allow its possibility and maintain that the Creator can cause us to

(4) Ashʿarī here ignores the obvious argument which the Muʿtazila used: what is visible is such because it has color, shape, etc., i.e. has accidents; for only accidents, and not substances, are visible. He does, however, touch on this point in No. 81.

(5) i.e. the organs of touch and taste (and smell).

hear Him speaking, since He has already caused Moses to hear Him speaking (6).

75. The proof that God will be seen by eyes is His declaration: « On that day faces will be bright, looking at their Lord.» (75.22-23) (7).

1) His words « looking at their Lord » cannot mean « considering as an example », as in the case of His words : « Will they not consider how the camels were created ? » (88.17), because the world to come is not the place for considering examples.

2) Nor can His words mean « feeling sympathy for » or « having mercy on », as in His words: « God will have no regard for them » (3.77/71) — i.e. will not have mercy on them or fe el sympathy for them — because the Creator cannot be the object of sympathy.

3) Nor can His words mean « expecting ». For when « look » is coupled with the mention of faces, it does not mean the «look» of the heart, which is expectation, just as, if «look» be coupled with the mention of the heart, it does not mean the « look » of the eye. For when a man says « Look with thy heart at this matter » he means the « look » of the heart. Likewise, if he couples « look » with the face, he means only the « look » of the face; and the «look» of the face is the « look » of seeing, which is done by the eye which is in the face.

So it is certain that His words « looking at their Lord » mean « seeing », since they cannot mean any of the other kinds of « look ». For if «look» is limited to four kinds, and three are impossible in the present case, the fourth kind must be certain, namely, the «look» of the seeing of the eye which is in the face.

(6) Various places in the Qur'ān. To Moses is applied the epithet « *kalīm Allāh* » — cf. Qur. 4.164/162.

(7) This is the classic proof-text. It is also used in *Ibāna*, 56-58, along with other texts.

76. O. Has not God said: «And on that day other faces will be frowning, thinking (8) that a misfortune is to be visited upon them» (75.24-25) ? But thinking is not done with the face. Similarly, then, His words « On that day some faces will be bright, looking at their Lord » mean the « look » of the heart.

A. Your objection has no force, because thinking is not done with the face, but only with the heart (9). Hence, since He coupled thinking with the mention of the face, it means the thinking of the heart, because thinking is done only with the heart. And if « look » were restricted to the heart, His mentioning it in connection with the face would have to refer to the heart. But since « looking » may be done by the face and in other ways, in coupling it with the mention of the face He must mean by it the « look » of the face, just as, in coupling it with the mention of the heart He would have to mean by it the « look » of the heart.

QUESTION

77. Q. Then what is the meaning of His words: « Eyes do not attain to Him, but He attains to eyes » (6.103) ? (10)

A. They refer to this life and not the next, for the Qur'ān does not contradict itself. Hence, since He says in

(8) So Blachère. Bell: « One would think »; Palmer: « Thou wilt think» ; Baiḍāwī (Cairo ed. 1344), 580, refers it to the owners of the faces — they will be awaiting.

(9) Arabic: *qalb* — the heart. It is used frequently where we should use «mind».

(10) Bāqillānī has no less than eight answers to this favorite objection of the Mu'tazila — *Inṣāf*, 161-163. It is interesting to note that one of the answers he suggests is that in the next life man will receive a new «sight» *(baṣar)*, enduring and imperishable, so that the Enduring (God) will be seen by the enduring. He also remarks that it has been said that the doctrine cannot be defended save on the score of God's creating a sixth sense for His friends by which they will see Him. One feels that he went further than Ash'arī.

another verse that eyes will look at Him, we know that the time of which He says that eyes do not attain to Him is different from the time in which He has revealed to us that they will be looking at Him.

78. (11) Q. Why do you deny that His words « looking at their Lord » mean « looking at the reward of their Lord » ?

A. The reward of God is something distinct from Him, and one may not turn from the literal to the figurative meaning of speech without a convincing reason or proof. Do you not see that when God said « Pray to Me and worship Me », (12) one could not say that He meant some one distinct from Him ? And if one could claim that His words « do not attain to Him » mean that eyes do not attain to something distinct from Him, one could also claim that His words « Pray to Me and worship Me » mean someone distinct from Him. If this be false, so is what they say.

79. O. If His words « Eyes do not attain to Him » refer to one time rather than another, then why do you deny that His words « Slumber lays not hold of Him, nor sleep » (2.255/256) refer to one time rather than another ?

A. The difference between the two is that He told us in one verse that eyes do not attain to Him, and He said in another verse that faces will look at Him. So we use both verses and say that the meaning therein is that they look at Him at one time and do not attain to Him at another. But He did not tell us in one verse that slumber and sleep lay hold of Him, and in another that they do not lay hold of Him, so that we must apply the verses to different times. Moreover, sleep is a defect which subsists in the sleeper and deprives him of

(11) Compare this paragraph with the discussion in the *Ibāna*, 57-58. There seems to be some confusion of texts, but the general argument is clear.

(12) « Worship Me » occurs several times in the Qur'ān, but I do not find there the phrase « Pray to Me ».

knowledge ; but seeing is not a defect which finds a locus in what is seen, and therefore seeing need not be denied for the same reason which compels the denial of sleep.

QUESTION

80. O. If the Eternal could be seen, although He is not like other things which are seen, then He could be touched and tasted and smelled, although He is not like other things which are tasted and touched and smelled.

A. What is the difference between you and him who says : And if the Eternal could be seeing, knowing, powerful, and living, although He is not like others who are seeing, knowing, powerful, and living, then He could be touching, tasting, and smelling, although He is not like others who are touching, tasting, and smelling ? (13) If there be no compulsion to say this, why do you deny that there is no compulsion to say what you have said ?

QUESTION

81. Q. Have you, then, ever seen anything visible which was not a substance or an accident, limited or inhering in something limited ?

A. No. But what is visible is not seen because it is limited, or because it inheres in something limited, or because it is a substance, or because it is an accident (14). Since that is

(13) Presumably Ash'arī would deny that God can be touching, tasting, and smelling. But his grounds would be more traditionist than rational. Recall what he said in No. 74.

(14) The adversary would say that what is visible is not such qua accident, but because it is an accident which is color. Ash'arī does not really meet this objection. Indeed, given his basic principle of the utter transcendence of God, it is hard to see how he could do more than take refuge in a kind of nominalistic agnosticism.

not so, one must not apply that judgment to the invisible. We likewise have no experience of an agent who is not a body, or of a thing which is neither substance nor accident, or of one knowing, powerful, and living who is not such by reason of temporally produced knowledge and life and power. Yet we must not apply that judgment to the invisible (15). For the agent is not an agent because he is a body, nor is the thing a thing because it is a substance or an accident.

(15) Yet, omitting the notion « temporally produced », is not this precisely what he has done in his rational proof of the existence of the divine attributes ?

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE QADAR (1)

82. Q. Why do you claim that the acquisitions (2) of creatures are created by God ?

A. We say that because God has said : « When it is God who has created you and what you make ? » (3) (37.96/94) ; and : « as a reward for that they once did » (46.14/13).

(1) I refer the reader in a general way to Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam* (and to Prof. Thomson's extended commentary on the same in *The Muslim World*, XL (1950) 207 ff. and 276 ff.), and to Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed*. For a later Ashʿarite discussion : *Irshād*, 173-232. Averroes has some interesting things to say : *Teologia*, 321-334. The Muʿtazila : *Nādir*, I, 77-79, and II, 58-73.

I have retained the Arabic word « *qadar* », which is so intimately bound up with the whole discussion. It conveys the idea « determination ». The main question is : Who determines human acts, God or man ? We have already seen that Ashʿarī held that God wills all such acts. The present chapter involves not only His determination, but also His creation of such acts *(khalq al-aʿmāl)*.

(2) Arabic : *aksāb*, plural of the famous term « *kasb* ». Cf. *Watt*, Index, s. v. *kasb (iktisāb)* ; also his article, *The Origin of the Islamic Doctrine of Acquisition*, in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, (1943) 234-247. The words (noun and verb) are used in the Qurʾān, where they seem to be a borrowing from the vocabulary of commerce and are applied to those actions of man for which he deserves reward or punishment, i.e. what we would call his human acts, or free acts.

(3) This seems to be the obvious meaning of the verse, despite Ashʿarī's argument. Blachère translates : « ce que vous avez façonné ». However, the Arabic word « *taʿmalūn* » contains the ideas of « make » and « do ».

Since the reward attaches to their works, God is the creator of their works.

83. Q. Has God not said: « Do you adore what you carve? » (37.95/93), meaning the idols which they had carved? Why, then, do you deny that His words « has created you and what you make » mean the idols which they had made?

A. Your supposition is wrong, because the idols really were carved by them, and hence God's words « Do you adore what you carve? » do refer to the idols. But the wood was not really made by them in such wise that God's words « has created you and what you make » must refer to it.

84. Q. Has God not said: « it catches up their deceiving » (7.117/114) (4)? But He did not mean their deception. Why, then, do you deny that His words « has created you and what you make » do not refer to their works?

A. Their deceiving was the likenesses which they pretended to men were moving serpents, and their deception was their pretending. So by His words « their deceiving » God meant their pretending to men that the likenesses were moving serpents, and their deception was their inducing men to imagine that the thing was contrary to what it really was. The likenesses were the subject of their deceiving and their pretending to men that they were really moving, and it was these which the staff of Moses caught up. But they could not really have made the wood. Hence, by His words « has created you and what you make » God could not have meant the wood, but must have been referring to their works, just as He

(4) It is impossible to give in these notes the context and background of every text mentioned by Ashʿarī. The reader may consult the translations, such as those of Bell (English) and of Blachère (French). The reader who knows Arabic will often find it instructive (and sometimes surprising) to consult such commentaries as those of Ṭabarī, Zamakhsharī, and Baiḍawī.

referred to works in His words « as a reward for what they once did ». So if one could claim that God's words « has created you and what you make » mean something other than their works, just as His words « their deceiving » mean something other than their deception, another could claim that God's words « as a reward for what they once did » mean something other than their works, just as His words « has created you and what you make » mean something other than their works, and as His words « their deceiving » mean something other than their deception. Since this cannot be, the questioner's assertion is impossible.

85. The rational proof of the creation of men's acts is our experience that unbelief is bad, false, vain, inconsistent, and of a certain contrariness, whereas faith is good, toilsome, and painful. And it is our experience that even though the unbeliever deliberately exert himself to make unbelief good and right, it will be contrary to his intention; and even though the believer wish that faith be not toilsome, painful, and vexatious, it will not be according to his wish and desire. Now we know that an act does not come to be as it really is unless someone produces it as such. For if it could come to be as it really is without a producer who produces it as such, then a thing could come to be as act without a producer who would have produced it is an act. Since that is impossible, it is certain that it comes to be as it really is only because someone intentionally produces it as such. For if an act could come to be as it really is without someone who intends that, one could not be sure but that all acts are like that, just as, if an act could come to be without an agent, one could not be sure but that all acts are like that.

86. Such being the case, unbelief must have a producer who intentionally produces it as unbelief, vain and bad (5).

(5) The examples of unbelief and belief may tend to obscure the

And its producer can never be the unbeliever, who desires that unbelief be good, right, and true, whereas it is the contrary of that. Likewise faith must have a producer who produces it as it really is, toilsome, painful, and vexatious, and who is not the believer, who, though he strive that faith be contrary to its actual painfulness, toilsomeness, and vexatiousness, has no way to effect that. So if the one who produces unbelief as it really is cannot be the unbeliever, and if the one who produces faith as it really is cannot be the believer, then the intentional producer of both must be God Most High, Lord of the Worlds (8). For no body can produce them, since bodies can effect nothing in things distinct from themselves (7).

87. Q. Why is it that the occurrence of the act which is an acquisition does not prove that it has no agent (8) save God, just as it proves that it has no creator save God?

A. That is exactly what we say.

Q. Then why does it not prove that there is no one with power over it save God?

A. It has no agent who makes it as it really is save God, and no one with power over it so that it will be as it really is, in the sense that he creates it, save God (9).

88. Q. Then why is it that its being an acquisition, as

issue. The full extent of the position to which Ashʿarī is committed may be better realized if we substitute disobedience and obedience, or sin and good act, for unbelief and belief. Later on Ashʿarī will have to deal with these.

(6) There is a hint here of another doctrine held by Ashʿarī, viz. the sole determinant of goodness and badness is the will of God; hence there is no such thing as an act good or bad *in se*.

(7) Another Ashʿarite thesis: God is the unique efficient cause of everything. This is emphasized in the following paragraph.

(8) Arabic: *fāʿil* — agent, maker, doer.

(9) The creature's power over it is a created power, and once God creates this power the act *must* take place concomitantly — cf. the next chapter, on the « capacity ».

it really is, does not prove that it really has no acquirer save God?

A. Acts must have an agent who makes them as they really are, because an act cannot dispense (10) with an agent. So if the agent who makes the act as it really is be not the body, God must be the agent who makes it as it really is. But the act does not need an acquirer who acquires it as it really is in the same way that it must have an agent who makes it as it really is (11), so that, if the act be an acquisition, God must be its acquirer.

89. Do you not see that necessary motion is itself proof that God is the agent who makes it as it really is, but not that the one moving thereby is really God — when the motion exists — just as He is the agent who really makes it? Nor must the one who moves of necessity be the agent of the motion as it really is — when he really moves thereby. For « the one moving » means that the motion finds its locus (12) in him — which is impossible respecting our Lord Most High. Similarly, if the acquisition is itself proof of an agent who makes it as it really is, it does not necessarily prove that the agent who makes it as it really is is also the one who acquires it; nor does it prove that the one who acquires it as it really

(10) Or: be independent of, get along without.

(11) This does not seem to be true, if the act is a human act, though it is obvious that God cannot be the subject of acquisitions. It may well be doubted that Ashʿarī's contribution to the vexed problem of the relation of God to human acts is anything more than terminological.

(12) I have usually translated the verb « *ḥalla* » by « find a locus in ». If I am not mistaken, Ashʿarī uses the word only of accidents, and so we might translate it by « find a subject of inhesion in », or simply, « find a subject in ». Many writers have emphasized the « atomism » of Ashʿarism. While I do not deny its importance, it seems to me that a very fruitful study could be made of the Ashʿarite notion and use of « accident » (*ʿaraḍ*).

is is also the agent who makes it as it really is. For the acquirer acquires a thing because it takes place in virtue of his created power over it. But the Lord of the Worlds cannot be one able to do a thing in virtue of a created power, and therefore cannot acquire the acquisition, although He is the agent who really makes it.

90. Q. Does a man, then, acquire the thing as it really is, i.e. as vain unbelief and good faith ?

A. This is an error. « He acquires unbelief » means only that he disbelieves in virtue of a created power. Likewise our saying « He acquires faith » means only that he believes in virtue of a created power, without his having acquired the thing as it really is (13). But he who makes it as it really is is the Lord of the Worlds. The question of lying, and that it has an agent who makes it as it really is, and one who is thereby lying, who is not the one who makes it as it really is, is to be treated as was the question of the agent who makes the motion as it really is, and the one who really moves thereby, who is not the one who makes the motion as it really is. We have already explained that above (14).

91. Another rational proof of the creation of men's acts is that the proof which proves that God creates necessary motion also proves that He creates acquired motion. For that which proves that God creates necessary motion is the latter's beginning to be — and the same is true of acquired motion (15).

(13) If the text is not faulty, he probably meant: without his having produced the thing as it really is, either entitatively or specifically. Otherwise it is not difficult to understand how the Ashʿarite « *kasb* » became a proverbial symbol of subtlety.

(14) It is hard to escape the conclusion that the liar, according to Ashʿarī, is under the same compulsion to lie as he is in any of his involuntary acts.

(15) Recall that for Ashʿarī there was no such thing as secondary causation. Hence any kind of motion — and anything outside God — must be due to the direct creation of God.

The creation of necessary motion is also proved by its need of a place and a time — and the same is true of acquired motion. Hence, since every proof by which one infers that necessary motion is created by God compels one to judge that acquired motion is also created by God. the creation of acquired motion is necessary for the same reasons that necessitate the creation of necessary motion.

92. O. Then if one of the two motions be necessary, the other must also be necessary. And if one of the two be an acquisition, the other must also be an acquisition.

A. There is no necessity of that, because the two differ with respect to necessity and acquisition. For necessity means that to which the thing is constrained and compelled and forced, and from which it can find no way to get free or to escape, even though it strive to be freed from it and want to escape from it and exhaust its endeavors to do so. So if one of the two motions be of this description, i. e. the description of necessity, as in the case of one shaking from palsy or shivering from fever, it is necessary motion; and if the other motion be of a contrary description, it is not necessary motion. For the man who goes and comes, and approaches and recedes, is quite different from one who shakes from palsy or shivers from fever. One knows how to distinguish between the two states, in himself and in others, by a necessary knowledge which leaves no room for doubt (16). So if there be impotence in one of the two states, power, which is its contrary, must exist in the other. For if impotence existed in both states together, the man's way of acting would be the same in both. Since this is not so, and since there is power in one of the motions, this

(16) This is certainly true, and it is the basis of the proof from consciousness of the freedom of the will. But Ashʿarī's further interpretation of the data of consciousness scarcely seems to touch the real difficulty. For his « acquired » motion seems to be quite as ineluctable and inevitable as his « necessary » motion.

motion must be an acquisition — because the true meaning of acquisition is that the thing proceeds from its acquirer in virtue of a created power. Now since the two states differ, in the two motions, and since one of them fulfils the notion of necessity, this one must be a necessary motion; and since the other fulfils the notion of acquisition, it must be an acquisition. But the proof of creation is the same with respect both to necessary and to acquired motion. Therefore, if one of the two motions be a creation, the other must also be a creation.

93. Surely it is clear that their differing with respect to necessity and acquisition does not necessitate their differing with respect to beginning to be and existing after having not existed. Likewise, then, their differing with respect to necessity and acquisition does not necessitate their differing with respect to creation. Do you not see that if a body be not prior to temporally produced things, it must itself be temporally produced, because it falls under the notion of beginning to be? But its falling under the notion of beginning to be, because it shares that notion with temporally produced things, does not mean, if one of the temporally produced things be a motion, that the body must be motion, or, if one of them be a body, that the motion must be a body. For they are equal, not with respect to the notions of body and motion, but with respect to the notion of temporal production. Similarly, then, since acquisition and necessity are alike with respect to the notion of creation and beginning to be, if one of them be a creation of God, the other must also be such. Hence their differing with respect to necessity and acquisition does not entail that the two motions differ with respect to creation ([17]).

(17) What is it, then, that specifically differentiates the two types of motion? Ashʿarī's answer would doubtless be that the acquired motion proceeds from its acquirer in virtue of a created power (cf. N° 92, supra). But this motion necessarily takes place concomitantly with that created power. Is, therefore, the difference between an act of man and a human act simply, in the last analysis, a matter of extrinsic denomination? It would seem that Ashʿarī would have to say yes.

94. Q. Why do you deny that what proves that one of the two motions is created by God is the fact that necessary motion takes place as something regarding which the creature is impotent? So if the other takes place as something over which the creature has power, it transcends ([18]) the necessity of being created by God.

A. If what takes place as an object of the power of someone other than God transcended the necessity of being created by God, there would be no guarantee that the motions of a man shaking from palsy or shivering from fever are not effected in the one moving necessarily by one of the angels empowered by God over that. For it is not impossible, according to our adversaries, for a creature possessing power to be able to effect something in another ([19]). Thus necessary motion would cease to prove that God made it as it is. Moreover, the same would have to be said of the motions of the celestial spheres and of the union and composition of the parts of the heavens. And if this were so, these things would cease to prove that God made them as they are, and one could not be sure but that the parts of the heavens have a uniter who is not God, and the celestial spheres an arranger, and the stars a mover who is not God. So if that cannot be, what they say is false, namely, that if a thing be the object of the power of someone other than God, it transcends the necessity of being created by God.

(18) Arabic: *kharajat min an* — lit. goes beyond, is outside of. Perhaps « transcends » is a little too strong.

(19) Ashʿarī is in basic opposition to this. God is the unique Creator of everything, and, vice versa, everything (which begins to be) is created. This is not a mere philosophical premise with Ashʿarī, but an imperious dogma which he derived from his reading of revelation and tradition.

95. Furthermore, impotency does not prove that God creates its object more forcibly than the power which God creates proves that God creates the object of the power. For that over which God creates in us power is a fortiori the object of His power, just as His knowledge of a thing is superior to that which He creates in us, and His hearing of a thing is superior to that which He creates in us. So if that be equally true of God's power, then when God empowers us over acquired motion it must be He who creates it in us as our acquisition ([20]). For when He can effect something in us, but does not effect it in us as an acquisition, He refrains from effecting it in us as an acquisition. And when He refrains from making it to be an acquisition of ours, it is impossible for us to acquire it. So what we have said proves that we acquire a thing only after God has created it as an acquisition of ours.

QUESTION

96. Q. If man's acquisition be a creation, then why do you deny that he is its creator?

A. I did not say that my acquisition is a creation of mine in such wise that I am compelled to say that I am its creator. I said only that it is another's creation. How, then, if it be the creation of another, am I compelled to say that I am its creator? If I were the creator of my acquisition, when it is really a creation of God, then God Himself would be moving by the necessary motion which He creates in one who moves thereby. Since that is impossible, because God creates it as the motion of another, we are not constrained by what they say, because our acquisition is a creation of another.

(20) How, then, is it « our acquisition » any more than one of our necessary motions is « our acquisition » ? This fundamental question is never really answered.

97. Q. Has not God, then, created the injustice of creatures?

A. He created it as their injustice, not as His ([21]).

Q. Then why do you deny that He is unjust?

A. One who is unjust is not unjust because he makes injustice as another's injustice and not as his. If he were unjust for this reason, no creature would be unjust. Hence, since one who is unjust is not unjust because he makes injustice as another's injustice, God is not necessarily unjust because He creates injustice as another's injustice and not as His ([22]). Moreover, if what they say were compelling, then, if God were to make a volition and a desire and a motion for another and not for Himself, He Himself would have to be willing, desiring, and moving. Since this is not necessary, neither is what they have said.

98. Q. Then God may create a motion which no one would acquire without being moving Himself.

A. And likewise, were God to create an injustice which no one would acquire, He would not thereby be unjust, but it would be injustice for him for whom He created it as injustice, and by it that one would be unjust.

99. Q. Then why does not God speak the speech of another just as He creates the injustice of another?

A. We did not say that He is unjust by the injustice of another in such wise that we must say that He speaks

(21) This is the basic distinction to which Ash‘arī returns again and again. It is hard to see how it leaves any room for human responsibility or merit, or how reward and punishment can be anything but pure arbitrariness on the part of God.

(22) Recall that injustice, according to Ash‘arī, depends solely on the divine will. Yet it seems fair to ask: How does anyone become really unjust if his injustice is handed to him, so to speak, ready-made?

by the speech of another. We simply said that He creates injustice for another, not for Himself, and is not thereby unjust Himself. So the parallel to this is that He creates speech for another, not for Himself, and is not thereby speaking Himself. Moreover, if this objection were compelling, He would have to utter the lie who does not lie, just as He makes the injustice who is not unjust, and He makes the willing who is not thereby willing, and He makes the motion who is not thereby moving. So if this be not compelling, neither is what they have said. Besides, we have already proved in the beginning of this book of ours that God's speech is one of His essential attributes. Therefore it is impossible for Him to be speaking by the speech of another, just as, since knowledge is one of His essential attributes, it is impossible for the knowledge of another to be a knowledge of His, and for the Lord of the Worlds to be knowing by a temporally produced knowledge.

QUESTION

100. Q. Is the creature ever free from being either the recipient of a favor for which he must give thanks, or the object of a trial which he must endure patiently ? ([23])

A. The creature is never free from favor and trial. Among trials are those which must be endured patiently, such as misfortunes of sickness and disease, those which affect one's goods and children, and the like. And among them are

(23) This particular question may have had a special historical background. Possibly the adversary merely wanted to underline the futility of any kind of human reaction to the visitations of God. It is unfortunate that we have so few reliable sources of information regarding the « other side ». Muʿtazilite texts seem to have disappeared almost completely. Perhaps the Shiʿite libraries will some day help us to a fuller reconstruction of Muʿtazilite views and arguments.

those which must not be endured patiently, such as unbelief and all other acts of disobedience ([24]).

QUESTION

101. Q. Has God decreed ([25]) and determined acts of disobedience ?

A. Yes, in the sense that He has created them, and has written ([26]) them down, and has announced that they will be. Thus He said : « And we decreed for the Children of Israel in the Book » (17.4) — i. e. we told them and informed them. And He said : « save his wife ; we had determined that she would be among those remaining behind » (27.57/58) — i. e. we wrote her down and announced that she would be among those remaining behind. But we do not say that God has decreed and determined acts of disobedience in the sense that He has commanded them.

102. Q. Is the decree of God right ?

A. The decree of God which is a creation includes what is right, such as acts of obedience and what God has not prohibited, and it also includes what is wrong, such as unbelief and acts of disobedience. For creation includes what is right and what is vain. But the decree of God which is a command, and the decree which is an informing, and an announcing, and a writing, is right, because it is distinct from what is decreed.

(24) This statement seems to imply that, practically at least, Ashʿarī felt the need of allowing to man some measure of self-determination.

(25) The verb *qaḍa* (and the noun *qaḍāʾ*) I translate by « decree ». They might also be translated by « decide » and « decision ». Bāqillānī enumerates various meanings of *qaḍāʾ* in his *Inṣāf*, 147.

(26) Cf. Qur. 9.51. The idea of God's writing down what will happen to every man is common in discussions of the qadar. Cf. A. de Vlieger, *Kitāb al-Qadar*, Leiden, 1903.

103. Some of our associates answer by saying: « God's decree of disobedience and unbelief . . . » — and they say of disobedience and unbelief : « They are false.» But they do not say of the decree that it is false. For one's saying : « The decree of God is false » is like his saying, when he sees a broken piece of wood, that the wood is broken, but is, nevertheless, an argument of God. But he does not say of the argument that it is broken, because this would lead one to imagine that the argument of God has no truth. Likewise, unbelief is false, yet unbelief is the decree of God in the sense that it is the creation of God. But we do not say : « The decree of God is false », because this would lead one to suppose that God's decree has no truth. It is like our saying : « The unbeliever believes in the idol and the image ». But we do not say : « The unbeliever believes... » and then remain silent, because that would be ambiguous. And we say : « The Prophet disbelieves in the idol and the image ». But we do not say : « The Prophet disbelieves... » and then remain silent, because that would be ambiguous.

QUESTION

104. Q. Are you pleased with (27) God's decree and determination of unbelief ?

A. We are pleased that God has decreed unbelief as bad and determined it as false, but we are not pleased that the unbeliever is thereby unbelieving, because God has forbidden us that. When we speak of being pleased with the decree we are not obliged to say the same of unbelief, just as, when we say that the piece of wood is an argument of God, and that the piece of wood is broken, we are not obliged to say that the argument of God is broken ; for this would lead

(27) i.e. Do you approve of...

one to imagine that the argument of God has no truth. Similarly, then, our being pleased applies to the decree and the determination, but not to the unbelief. This is the answer of those associates of ours whose reply we mentioned above.

105. Other associates of ours reply to the question by saying that we are pleased with the decree and determination of God with which He has commanded us to be pleased, thus following the order of Him Who cannot be contravened or gainsaid. This is like our being pleased with the survival of the Prophets and our dislike of their deaths, and our dislike of the continued existence of the devils — but everything is by the decree of the Lord of the Worlds !

QUESTION

106. Q. Which is better : the good, or he from whom the good proceeds ?

A. He from whom the good proceeds, and to whom it is united (28), is better than the good.

Q. And which is worse : the evil, or he from whom the evil proceeds ?

A. He from whom the evil proceeds in such wise that he is thereby unjust is worse than the evil (29).

QUESTION

107. Q. Do you hold that evil is from God ?

A. Some of our associates say that all things are from God, in globo, without saying of evil specifically that it is from God. This is like one's saying that all things, in globo,

(28) i.e. so that it can be said to be *his* good.

(29) Recall Ash'arī's dictum that God creates evil as evil for another, not for Himself. Cf. next paragraph.

belong to God, without saying, in detail, that wife or child belong to God. Or it is like our saying, in globo, that what is inferior to God is weak, without saying, in detail, that the religion of God is weak. The Shaikh Abu'l-Ḥasan said: But I maintain that evil is from God in the sense that He creates it as evil for another, not for Himself.

QUESTION

108. Q. Then what is the meaning of God's words: « They twist their tongues in the Book so that you may think that what they say is from the Book: but it is not from the Book! And they say: It is from God. But it is not from God! » (3.78/72)? ([30])

A. These words mean that they perverted the description of the Apostle of God and led the foolish among them to imagine that it was from their Book. God said: « But it is not from the Book! And they say: It is from God » — i.e. God has revealed it — and God said: « But it is not from God! » — i.e. I did not reveal that to them, as they pretend.

QUESTION

109. Q. Then what is the meaning of God's words: « You see, in the creation of the Benefactor, no irregularity » ([31]). (67.3)?

A. God said: « Who has created seven heavens in layers » — i.e. one above the other; « You see, in the creation

(30) The real force of the objection — and Ashʿarī does not meet it directly — seems to be that the text proves that those men did something evil which was not from God.

(31) Cf. Blachère's note on this word, II, 272. Bell has « oversight ». Presumably the point of the objection is that God does not create anything bad.

of the Benefactor, no irregularity » — i.e. in the heavens. For God said: « Look again! » — after He had mentioned the heavens — « Do you see any fissures? » (67.3) — i.e. any cracks; but unbelief does not have cracks in it. Then God said: « Then look again, twice over! » — i.e. at the heavens and the earth; « Your sight will come back to you weakened » — i.e. hurt, « and worn out » — i.e. overcome. (67.4) But God made no mention of unbelief or of the acts of creatures in this verse, and therefore it contains no argument for the Qadariyya.

QUESTION

110. Q. Then what is the meaning of God's words: « Who has executed perfectly ([32]) all that He has created » (32.7/6)?

A. They mean that He is proficient in creating, just as one says that so-and-so is proficient in the goldsmith's craft, meaning that he knows how to do goldsmith's work. So God declared that He knows how to create things.

QUESTION

111. Q. Then what is the meaning of God's words: « And we did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in ([33]) vain » (38.27/26)?

A. God said: « That is the supposition of those who disbelieve » (*ibid.*). That proves that the verse means: « He created them both and what is between them », and not:

(32) Blachère: « qui a excellé en tout... » The objector wants it to mean « who has made good » rather than « who has made well ».

(33) Arabic: *bāṭilan*. Blachère: « à la légère »; Bell: « to no purpose ». The objector wants the verse to mean that God creates no « *bāṭil* », i.e. nothing false or vain.

« I shall not reward him who obeys me, nor shall I punish him who disobeys me and disbelieves in me ». For the unbelievers thought that they would neither be quickened nor raised from the dead in order to be punished. So God explained that He had created creatures only that some of them might come to a reward and others return to punishment, and that the unbelievers thought otherwise. He made it clear that it was a question of reward and punishment, because He went on to say: « Shall we treat those who will have believed and done pious works like the fomenters of evil on the earth? Or shall we treat the pious like the profligate? » (38.28/27) Thus He announced that it was the opinion of the polytheists, of whom He disapproved, that there would be no punishment which would cause a separation between believers and unbelievers.

112. The Shaikh Abu'l-Ḥasan said: One may also interpret « We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain » as meaning: « I did not create *all of that* as vain », because the vain is only a part of God's creation. And it may be interpreted as: « I did not create that *as vain* » — i.e. « I did not make it vain when I created both of them, because the vain began to exist after I had created them » (34).

113. Moreover, God has said: « He who, in six days, created the heavens and the earth and what is between them » (25.59/60). The universality of these words proves that He created the creatures between them who began to exist, such as the angels who were between them, and the acts of living beings which He created at that time (35). Why, then, do they conclude from one of the two verses that God did not create

(34) These interpretations are ingenious, but apparently unnecessary.

(35) This last point seems to be a rather partisan interpretation of the text.

the vain, and yet not conclude from the other that God created the acts of angels and others which were between them at that time?

114. One should also say to them: If God's words concerning the polytheists — « They twist their tongues in the Book so that you may think that what they say is from the Book: but it is not from the Book! And they say: It is from God. But it is not from God! » (3.78/72) — mean that God did not create what they said, then why are not acts of obedience created by God, since you maintain that they are from God? And if unbelief and acts of disobedience are not created by God because they contain faults (36), then why are not acts of obedience created by God, since you hold that they do not contain faults? And if God's words « Who has executed perfectly all that He has created » (32.7/6) apply universally to everything which God created, then why do not His words « the Creator of everything » (13.16/17) apply to everything distinct from Himself?

115. Q. Then what is the meaning of God's words: « And we created not the heavens and the earth and what is between them save with (37) truth » (15.85)?

A. God created all that. So if He said to it « Be! », the truth was His saying to both of them « Be! » and they were.

QUESTION

116. The champions of the Qadar should be asked: Do not God's words « the Knower of everything » (2.29/27) prove that there is nothing knowable which God does not know? If

(36) A reference to the text in N° 109.

(37) Blachère: « avec sérieux ».

they agree, they should then be asked: Why, then, do you deny that God's words « over everything Powerful » (2.20/19) prove that there is nothing which can be done over which God has not power? And that His words « the Creator of everything » (13.16/17) prove that there is nothing produced or made of which God is not Producer, Maker, and Creator?

QUESTION

117. Q. What is the meaning of God's words: « that God is quit of the polytheists (38), and His Apostle, too » (9.3)?

A. This verse was revealed concerning the treaties that existed between the polytheists and the Apostle of God. For God said: «A quittance from God and His Apostle directed to those polytheists with whom you convenanted: Travel in the earth for four months, and know that you cannot thwart God, but that God confounds the unbelievers » (9.1-2). Thus God granted them four months of immunity. Then He said: «And a notice from God and His Apostle» — i.e. an announcement from God and His Apostle — « to men on the day of the Greater Pilgrimage, that God is quit of the polytheists, and His Apostle, too » — i.e. released from the treaties that existed between the Apostle of God and them, once the four months should have elapsed. Then he excepted a group of the polytheists — it is said that they were of Banū Kināna — and said: « excepting those with whom you covenanted at the Masjid al-Ḥarām; as long as they are straightforward with you, be you straightforward with them » (9.7) — i.e. until their time elapses.

118. Moreover, God explicitly mentioned the polytheists, and He did not say «quit of their polytheism». So if His

(38) The objector wants this phrase to mean that God has nothing to do with polytheists as such. Hence, by implication, their polytheism is entirely their own doing.

words « quit of the polytheists » proved that He had not created their polytheism, they would also prove that He had not created the polytheists themselves, because He would be quit both of the polytheists and of their polytheism. And if His words «quit of the polytheists» entailed His not having created their polytheism, the Qadariyya would be forced to admit, since God has said that He is « the Patron of the believers » (3.68/61), that God creates the faith of the believers. Since they do not hold this to be so, what they say is vain.

QUESTION

119. The following difficulty may be raised: There were twins in a desert, and it occurred to the heart of one of them that God is one: who cast that into his heart? God. Was what God cast into his heart true? Yes. Did God tell him the truth in what He cast into his heart? God's veracity is simply His speech. But what occurred to the man's heart was not God's speech in such wise that one should say that God told him the truth therein (39). Now for the other twin: It occurred to his heart that God is the third of three (40): who cast that into his heart? God. Was what God cast into his heart false? Yes. Did God tell him the truth in what He cast into his heart, or did He lie to him? It is wrong to say of God that He told him the truth therein, because the Creator's veracity is one of His essential attributes, and is in fact His speech. And it is wrong

(39) I think that Ashʿarī means that what actually occurred to the man's heart was not God's speech, which is a divine attribute, but something created. In the first case this created something was true; in the second case it was a lie, but imputable to God only as His creation, and not as His utterance.

(40) A common phrase to indicate the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. One might have expected that Ashʿarī would have refused to take this rather fantastic objection seriously. But he accepts it soberly and painstakingly answers it.

to say that God lied to him therein, because lying cannot be predicated of the Creator, since it is impossible for Him to lie. But when God creates lying for another, or creates a lie in the heart of another, it is not necessary that He be lying, just as, when He creates a power, or a volition, or a motion in another, it is not necessary that He be thereby powerful, or willing, or moving.

QUESTION

120. Q. Why have you named us Qadariyya ? (41)

A. Because you claim that *you* determine your acquisitions and effect them as something determined by you and not by your Creator. The Qadarī is he who ascribes that to himself, just as the goldsmith is he who acknowledges that he himself does goldsmith's work and not he who claims that it is done for him, and as the carpenter is he who claims that he himself does carpentering and not he who acknowledges that it is done for him, without his doing any of it himself. Likewise, the Qadarī is he who claims that he himself makes his acts to be determined, and not his Lord, and who claims that his Lord effects nothing of his acquisition.

121. Q. You are constrained to admit that *you* are Qadariyya, because you affirm the Qadar of God.

A. We affirm that God determines our works and creates them as determined for us, but we do not affirm that of ourselves. But he who affirms the Qadar of God and claims that the acts are determined by his Lord is not a Qadarī, just as he who affirms goldsmith's work and carpentering of another is himself neither goldsmith nor carpenter. If we were

(41) *Ibāna*, 113 ; *Watt*, 48-50, and the article of Nallino to which he refers, in *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, VII (1916-18) 461-6 — reprinted in *Raccolta di scritti editi e inediti*, II, 176 ff.

Qadariyya, because we say that God makes our acts as determined for us, they would be Qadariyya because they say that God makes all His acts as determined for Him. And if we were Qadariyya because we say that God determines acts of disobedience, they would be Qadariyya because they say that God determines acts of obedience. Since that is not the case, what they say is false.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF THE CAPACITY (1)

122. Q. Why do you say that man is capable in virtue of a capacity which is distinct from him?

A. He is sometimes capable and sometimes impotent, just as he knows at one time and does not know at another, and now moves and again does not move. Therefore he must be capable in virtue of something distinct from him, just as he must be knowing in virtue of something distinct from him, and as he must be moving in virtue of something distinct from him. For if he were capable of himself, or in virtue of something inseparable from him, he would not exist save as capable. But since he is sometimes capable and sometimes incapable, it is true and certain that his capacity is something distinct from him (2).

123. Q. You affirm of man a capacity which is distinct from him; but why do you claim that it cannot precede the act?

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(1) Arabic: *Istiṭā'a*. The usual translation seems to be «capacity». Cf. *Tritton*, 68, and n. 2. Wensinck uses « faculty » in MC. The word means « ability », or « power ». Ash'arī himself uses *qudra* and *quwwa* as synonyms — cf. the following paragraphs, and *Watt*, 90, n. 37. For a Mu'tazilite distinction between *qudra* and *istiṭā'a*, cf. *Nādir*, II, 61. But of course Ash'arī denied that distinction.

(2) It should be remembered that the chief concern is with human acts.

A. We claim that because the act must begin to exist either with the capacity at the very moment that the latter begins to be, or after it. If the former is the case, then it is true and certain that the capacity exists with the act and for the act. But if the existence of the act is posterior to that of the capacity — and there is solid proof that the capacity does not endure (3) — then the act must begin to exist in virtue of an inexistent power. If that were possible, impotence could begin to exist after the capacity had ceased to exist so that the act would take place in virtue of an inexistent power. And if a man could act, at a time when he was impotent, in virtue of an inexistent power, then he could act a hundred years after the power had begun to be, even though he would have been impotent during all those hundred years, and that in virtue of a power which would have been inexistent for a hundred years. This is false.

124. Moreover, if the act could begin to exist, despite the nonexistence of the power, and if the act could take place in virtue of an inexistent power, then burning could be effected by the heat of an inexistent fire after God had turned the fire into cold, and cutting could be effected by an inexistent sword after God had turned the sword into a reed, and the cutting could be done by an inexistent limb — all of which is impossible. So if that be impossible, the act must begin to exist with the capacity at the very moment that the latter begins to exist.

125. Q. Why do you claim that the power does not endure?

A. If it were to endure, it would endure either of itself or because of a duration (4) subsisting in it. Now if it

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(3) N° 125, infra.

(4) Arabic: *baqā'*. The question of baqā' gave rise to many subtleties. For a definition, and reference to disputes, cf. 'Abd al-Qāhir

were to endure of itself, it would have to be its own duration, and it could not exist save as enduring. But this would necessitate that it be enduring at the very moment that it begins to be. On the other hand, if it were to endure because of a duration subsisting in it — and duration is a quality — a quality would subsist in a quality, and an accident in an accident; and that is false. For if a quality could subsist in a quality, then a power could subsist in a power, and a life in a life, and a knowledge in a knowledge; and that is false.

126. Q. Why do you deny that the power over a thing is a power over both it and its contrary?

A. It is a condition of created power that its existence include the existence of the object of the power (5). For if that were not so, and if it could exist for one unit of time without an object, then it could exist for two or more units of time without an object, since there is no difference between one unit of time and two or more units. And if that were so, it could exist perpetually, the creature possessing it being all the while an agent in no wise acting. Do you not see that, since it is not a condition of the Eternal's power that its existence include the existence of its object, and since it can exist without any act, it is not impossible for it to exist eternally without any sort of act? But since it is impossible for a man's power to exist perpetually without the existence of an act of his, use or abstention, obedience or disobedience, so long as the command and prohibition remain in force, the same impossibility is true of even one unit of time. And if it be impossible for his power to exist without an object for even one unit of time, it must be

al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, 42.12-18; and 50.10 ff. on the impossibility of the duration of accidents.

(5) This seems to beg the question. But presumably Ashʿarī feels that he has sufficiently established the simultaneity of the power and the act.

a condition of man's power that its existence include the existence of its object. Since that is so, it is impossible for a man to have power over both the thing and its contrary. For if he had power over both, both would have to exist; and that cannot be.

127. Q. Why do you deny that there may be one power over two volitions, or over two motions, or over two like things?

A. We deny that because a power is a power only over what exists with it in its locus (6). So if there were one power over two motions, it would have to be a power either over two motions such that they would exist with it at the moment that it began to exist, or over two motions that would exist one after the other. Now if it were a power over two motions which would exist simultaneously, two motions would exist in one place at the same time. If this were possible, one of the two motions could be supplanted by its contrary, i.e. quiescence, so that the substance would be simultaneously moving from and quiescent in its place; but this impossible. On the other hand, if it were a power over two motions which would exist one after the other — and it has already been proved and demonstrated that the power does not endure — this would necessitate the existence of the act in virtue of an inexistent power; but we have already shown the falsity of this.

128. Another proof that the capacity is with the act and for the act is the fact that he for whom God does not create a capacity cannot acquire anything. Hence, since he cannot acquire the act if there be no capacity, it is certain that the acquisition exists only because the capacity exists. And this is equivalently an affirmation that the capacity exists with the act and for the act.

(6) Arabic: *maḥall* — locus, or subject, or substrate.

129. Q. Is it not true that the nonexistence of the limb entails the nonexistence of the act ? (7)

A. The nonexistence of the limb entails the nonexistence of the power, and the nonexistence of the power entails the nonexistence of the acquisition. For if the limb does not exist, the power will not exist. But it is because of the nonexistence of the power that the acquisition is impossible — when the limb does not exist — and not because of the nonexistence of the limb. If the limb were inexistent, and the power existed, the acquisition would take place. Furthermore, if the acquisition were impossible only because of the nonexistence of the limb, then when the limb existed the acquisition would exist. But since the limb can exist in conjunction with impotence, whereas, when the power is inexistent there is no acquisition, we know that the acquisition does not take place, because of the nonexistence of the capacity, and not because of the nonexistence of the limb.

130. Q. Is it not true that the nonexistence of life entails the nonexistence of the acquisition ?

A. Yes, because when life does not exist the power does not exist; and it is because of the nonexistence of the power that the acquisition is impossible, not because of the nonexistence of life. Do you not see that life can exist along with impotence, so that a man does not acquire ? We know, therefore, that the acquisition is not inexistent because of the nonexistence of life, and that it does not exist simply because life exists. So the answer respecting life is like that respecting the limb.

131. Q. If the nonexistence of knowledge of how to weave entails the nonexistence of weaving, why does not the existence of such knowledge entail the existence of weaving ?

(7) The Muʿtazila in general seem to have held that the capacity consisted in soundness of body, freedom from ailments, etc. For the doctrine held by various individuals, cf. *Tritton*, Index, s.v. « capacity ».

A. The weaving is inexistent because of the nonexistence of the power to do it, not because of the nonexistence of the knowledge of how to do it. If the weaving were inexistent because of the nonexistence of the knowledge of how to do it, it would exist when such knowledge existed. Since that is not the case, and since knowledge of how to do it may be accompanied by impotence, we know that the nonexistence of the weaving is due only to the nonexistence of the power to do it, and that, were God to make it a custom to create the power to do it along with the nonexistence of the knowledge of how to do it, the weaving would indubitably take place.

132. Q. If the nonexistence of allowing (8) and freedom from restraint entails the nonexistence of the act, then their existence entails the existence of the act.

A. So we say (9).

Q. If the nonexistence of a constitution capable of supporting the act entails the nonexistence of the act, why does not the existence of such a constitution entail the existence of the act ?

A. That is just what we say, because the constitution supports only what subsists in it (10). And every objection they urge concerning this point is to be answered as we answered the objections regarding the limb and life, because the nonexistence of the acquisition is not due to the nonexistence of such things.

(8) Arabic : *al-takhliya* — i.e. putting no obstacle or hindrance in the way.

(9) Presumably because God's «allowing» would have to include the creation of the power.

(10) Presumably because the constitution *(binya)* would have to include the power.

133. Another proof that the capacity is with the act is to be found in the words of al-Khiḍr to Moses: « You will certainly be unable to have patience with me » (18.67/66). So we know that, since Moses was not patient, he was not capable of being patient. This shows that when there is no capacity, no act takes place, and that when there is a capacity, the act indubitably takes place.

134. Another proof of that is the fact that God has said: « They were unable to understand » (11.20/22), and: « and who were unable to understand » (18.101) — although they had been commanded and ordered to understand the truth. That also proves that God can enjoin what cannot be done (11), and that he who does not accept the truth and does not readily listen to it is unable to do so.

Q. Are they not able to accept it?

A. What is the difference between you and him who says that they are unable to accept the truth because they are preoccupied with omitting to accept it?

QUESTION

135. Q. Has not God charged the unbeliever with the duty of believing?

A. Yes.

Q. Then the unbeliever is capable of believing.

A. If he were capable of believing, he would believe.

Q. Then God enjoins on him an obligation which he cannot fulfil.

A. This is a statement which involves two matters.

(11) A reference to the famous question: Can God enjoin upon man what the latter cannot do? Cf. *Watt*, 69; *Irshād*, 206-8; *Justo Medio*, 269-274; *al-Rawḍat al-Bahiyya*, 53-7.

If you mean by your words that he is incapable of believing because of his impotence to do so — no. But if you mean that he is incapable of believing because he omits to do so and is preoccupied with the contrary of belief — yes.

Q. Then why do you deny that God enjoins on the unbeliever an obligation which he is unable to fulfil because he omits to fulfil it?

A. Inability to do a thing is had when both the thing and its contrary are beyond one's power (12). Hence it is impossible for one who is unable to do a thing to be unable simply because he omits to do it.

136. Q. Why do you deny that one who is able to do a thing is also able to do its contrary, just as one who is unable to do a thing is also unable to do its contrary?

A. If the power to do a thing were also a power to do its contrary, by analogy with inability, then help to do a thing would have to be help also to do its contrary, by analogy with the fact that inability to do a thing is also inability to do its contrary. Moreover, if the power to do a thing were also a power to do its contrary, by analogy with inability, (because inability to do a thing is also inability to do its contrary), then the same necessity would apply to both inability and power, namely that both the thing and its contrary should result from the power, just as both the thing and its contrary are rendered impossible by the inability. And if, when the inability exists, both the thing and its contrary (which are the objects of the inability) are inexistent, and the man who has the inability acquires neither of them, then the

(12) This may seem to be a rather odd notion of «inability». But it is also accepted and used by Bāqillānī in his treatise on the apologetic miracle. Bear in mind that for Ashʿarī the existence of an ability, or power, entailed the simultaneous existence of the object of the power. In the light of this notion this and the following number may be more intelligible.

same would have to be true of the power. The existence of the latter, as a power over the thing and its contrary, would therefore require that the thing and its contrary coexist with it. For one's judgment regarding the coexistence of the two contraries with the existence of the power must be the opposite of one's judgment regarding the inability. And in the case of the inability one judges that both the object of the inability and its contrary must be inexistent when the inability exists. So if such a comparison be impossible, their allegation is vain and their objection collapses, and there is no necessity of comparing the power with the inability, since there is no reason which brings them together (13), and since power does not belong to the genus of inability.

137. Q. Then God can enjoin a thing when the limb does not exist and the inability exists.

A. No, because a man is commanded only to accept or omit, and when the limb does not exist there can be neither acceptance nor omission. Likewise, when inability exists, neither acceptance nor omission can coexist with it, because it is inability to do either the thing or its contrary. Moreover, if, in the case of God's commanding a man to do a thing when the man's limb did not exist, God would have to command the thing in the absence of all power, then, in the case of God's commanding a man when the latter lacked certain knowledge — knowledge of God, and knowledge that He was commanding — God would have to command him to act in the absence of all knowledge (14). So if this be not necessary, neither is it necessary, when God commands a man in the absence of the power to do what He commands him to do, that He should command in the absence of the limb —

(13) i.e. nothing common to them both.

(14) I believe the translation is correct, but the precise meaning of the argument eludes me.

an absence that entails the absence of all power — or that He should command when inability exists — an existence which does not entail the nonexistence of the power.

138. The Shaikh Abu'l-Ḥasan said: And every question concerning the enjoining of what cannot be done — such as commanding the payment of the Zakāt (15) when a man has no wealth, and so forth — is to be answered as I have answered their question about commanding when the limb is inexistent, and enjoining an obligation when inability exists.

139. Q. Why do you deny that the thing and its contrary may be inexistent because of the existence of two inabilities?

A. Because there is a limit to what cannot be done by the impotent man who has no power at all. But if the inability to do each particular thing were distinct from the inability to do every other thing, such a man would have unlimited inabilities — which is absurd. Moreover, death is the greatest of inabilities, since all acts are impossible when it is present. Now if the inability to do each particular thing were distinct from the inability to do every other thing, then the nonexistence of acts, in the case of a dead man, would be due to the existence of all inabilities. This would necessitate the presence in one atom (16) of two inabilities and two deaths. But if this were possible, one of the two could be supplanted by life with the result that the same atom would be simultaneously living and dead — which is absurd. Since this is impossible, we know that it is absurd for one to say that the inability to do each

(15) A religious tax legally binding on Muslims. Cf. art. Zakāt, in EI or Hwb.

(16) Arabic: *juz'*. Here perhaps «individual» would be better. But death and inability were both classified among the accidents — cf. al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, 43.8 ff. and 44.11; and Bāqillānī seems to say that it is the atom which receives the accident — *Tamhīd*, 41.21 ff.

particular thing is distinct from the inability to do every other thing. And in God is help !

QUESTION

140. Q. Tell us about a man who divorced his wife and freed his slave: when was he able to divorce the one and to free the other?

A. He was able to free his slave at the moment of the manumission, and to divorce his wife at the moment of the divorce.

Q. Then he was able to divorce her who was not his wife, and to free him who was not his slave (17) !

A. He was able to divorce her who was not his wife at the moment of the divorce, but who had been his wife prior to that, and to free him who was not his slave at the moment of the manumission, but who had been his slave prior to that — just as he divorced her who was not his wife at the moment of the divorce, but who had been his wife prior to that. The same answer should be given to queries about throwing down a staff, and passing from the sun to the shade, and breaking what is broken.

QUESTION

141. Q. Tell us about the words of God: « and for those who are able to do it (18) there is a ransom » (2.184/180).

(17) The point of the objector seems to be that a man is never in a position *actually* to divorce his wife, since, the moment he is *able* to do so, she is divorced. Ashʿarī, on the other hand, would seem to mean that he is never able to divorce her until he actually divorces her.

(18) Arabic: *yuṭṭqūnahu*. Bell: « those who are in a position to fast » — which seems to be the obvious meaning. However, see

A, They may be interpreted as signifying that God meant those who are able to feed a poor man and who are unable to fast; for them there is a ransom if they break the fast. They may also be interpreted as signifying that God meant those who are able to fast, i.e. if they undertake it and will it (19). This second interpretation accords with the view of those who refer the « it » (20) of « able to do it » to an antecedent already mentioned, i.e. the fast.

142. The Muʿtazila maintain that the « it » can refer only to an antecedent already mentioned, i.e. the fast. Our answer to them is that the first interpretation which we mentioned is the interpretation of some of the ancients (21), and that the grammarians are no argument against the Companions and the Followers. Nevertheless, many grammarians do allow that the « it » does not refer to an antecedent already mentioned.

143. Then we counterattack the Muʿtazila and say to them: Tell us about God's words: « He it is who created you from one soul, and from that soul He made its consort that the man might trust in her » — i.e. Adam and Eve. « And after he had covered her she carried a light burden, and she passed her days with it. Then when she became heavy » — i.e. Eve — « they both prayed to God their Lord: If Thou wilt give us a virtuous son, we shall surely be among the grateful » — i.e. Adam and Eve (7.189); and his words: « Then when He had

Baiḍāwī, 39 and Zamakhsharī, I, 226, for other possible readings. The force of the objection seems to be: The Qurʾān (i.e. God) says that those who *are able* to fast may nevertheless adopt an alternative, i.e. feeding a poor man.

(19) This meaning also seems to be allowed by the commentators.

(20) This is the objective pronominal suffix, i.e. the « hu » (it) of *yuṭṭqūnahu*. The question is: does it refer to *al-ṣiyām* (the fast), mentioned in the previous verse, or to the alternative of the ransom, mention of which follows.

(21) Cf. Baiḍāwī, l.c.

given them » (7.190). The Muʿtazila claim that the « them » of « had given them » does not refer to something mentioned previously, but to the polytheists among the children of Adam and Eve (22). Thus they contradict their view that the « it » of «able to do it» refers only to an antecedent already mentioned. Moreover one of the Companions read the text (23)...and interpreted it as meaning that they are obliged by it but are unable to do it (24).

QUESTION

144. Q. What about God's words: « And pilgrimage to the House is a duty towards God incumbent on those who can find a way to accomplish it » (3.97/91) ?

A. God meant material means, i.e. provisions and a mount, and not bodily capacity, the existence of which entails the existence of the object of its power. The proof from reason that the capacity is with the act confirms our interpretation and refutes that of our adversaries.

QUESTION

145. Q. What is the meaning of God's words: « And they will swear by God: 'Were we able, we would certainly go out with you' » (9.42) ? Must they not mean that they were able to go out but did not, and that even though they were able to go out, they did not?

A. By ability they meant wealth and means, and

(22) On the face of it the « them » seems to refer to Adam and Eve. Yet what Ashʿarī says seems to be the view of the commentator Zamakhsharī — II, 187.

(23) Ashʿarī here repeats the text, but since there are no vowels in the manuscript it is difficult to say just what the difference in the reading was.

(24) This seems to be the sense, but the uncertainty of the reading also affects the understanding of the interpretation.

they swore to the Apostle of God that they had no means and no mounts on which to go with the Prophet of God. So God gave them the lie respecting their oath, because they did have the means. But the dispute between them and the Apostle of God was not about whether the capacity is with or prior to the act; it was simply a quarrel about wealth and mounts. Such is what has been mentioned by the commentators, the transmitters of traditions, and the relaters of the same. If this be the case, we do not deny that material means must precede the act; we simply deny that the bodily capacity is prior to the act.

QUESTION

146. Q What about God's words: « So fear God as well as you can » (64.16) ?

A. These words may be interpreted in the sense that God meant « Fear God, in so far as you are able to do so ». So if they are able to fear God, they are bound to do so; and if they are able to omit doing so, they are still bound to fear God, because the fear of God is binding on them only if they are able to effect it or able to omit it. The words may also be interpreted as « Fear God in whatever you are able to do so. »

QUESTION

147. Q. What about God's words: « and he who cannot must feed sixty poor people » (58.4/5) ?

A. These words mean: « He who cannot, because of an inability, must feed sixty poor people. »

148. Q. What about God's words: « God demands of a soul only what He has given it » (65.7) ?

A. They mean that God enjoins the spending only of what He has given the soul. For He said that after having

mentioned spending : « And let him whose sustenance has been determined for him spend of what God has given him. God demands of a soul only what He has given it. »

149. Q. What about God's words : « God enjoins upon a soul only what it can do » (2.286) ?

A. They mean that God does not enjoin upon a soul anything that would afflict it too severely, such as banishing from one's soul thoughts which invite to evil ; for God may overlook that and be generous to Muslims regarding the disobedience to which their souls invite them, if they do not commit it after its having been such an affliction for them (25). So the meaning of « God enjoins upon a soul only what it can do » is « only what He makes possible for it. » For what God commands His creatures to do is not too difficult for them, and they are not unable to effect it (26). And some of our associates have said that « God enjoins upon a soul only what it can do » means « only what it can do *lawfully*. »

150. Q. What about the words which God related of the ʿifrīt : « Truly I have the strength to do it, and I am faithful » (27.39) (27) ?

A. If the ʿifrīt was telling the truth, his words « Truly I have the strength to do it, and I am faithful » mean : « If I undertake that and will it. » And if he was one for whom, when he willed that, God would produce the power to do it, then he did not lie. But if he did not say these words in that sense, then he did lie. However, the speech of ʿifrīts and devils

(25) This seems to be sense of the Arabic ; but if Ashʿarī is consistent it is hard to see how they could thus acquire any merit for not doing what they could not do.

(26) Nor are they able to effect in unless God supplies the *istiṭāʿa*, according to Ashʿarī. Otherwise they can only « omit to do » the thing, and are somehow responsible.

(27) The reader should consult the context in order to appreciate the difficulty. (And so for the texts which follow).

contains no argument against the religion of the Lord of the worlds.

151. The Muʿtazila claim that Solomon, who was one of God's Prophets, did not call the ʿifrīt a liar when he said : « I shall bring it to you before you can rise from your place. Truly I have the strength to do it, and I am faithful ». And they say that no one can lie in the presence of a Prophet, for he knows that God will refute any lie of his by the tongue of the Prophet. Thus God said to His Prophet : « When the Hypocrites come to you they say : 'We testify that you are indeed the Apostle of God'. And God knows that you are indeed His Apostle, and God testifies that the Hypocrites are indeed liars » (63.1). So God Himself made it known that they were lying. And there are many similar instances in the Qurʾān. The Muʿtazila argue, therefore, from the ʿifrīt's words, that the capacity is prior to the act. Wretched their thought and opinion ! Nay, but their own souls have enticed them into vanities !

152. We reply to him who thus argues against us : In this verse related by God of the ʿifrīt, by his words « Truly I have the strength to do it, and I am faithful » the ʿifrīt must have meant either « If I am able to do that and undertake it and will it », or, « Truly I have the strength to do it, and I am faithful, *God willing* ». If Solomon had not known that the ʿifrīt was suppressing some such phrase, he would certainly have called him a liar and refuted what he had said.

153. That is proved by God's words : « And they were unable to surmount it, nor could they breach it » (18.97/96). The explanation of this — and it is not disputed by anyone who professes the unicity of God — is that they were hoping every day to find that they had opened it without having said « God willing ». But if it had been determined, they would have said « God willing », and would have found that they had

opened it. So this proves that they had no capacity before the act, but only with the act and for the act precisely because God willed that.

154. Then there are the words of God about the companion of Joseph: « But the devil made him forget to mention Joseph to his master; so Joseph remained in prison for several years » (12.42). The devil caused the man who was released to forget to mention Joseph to the king. So the man who was released had no capacity to mention the affair of Joseph to the king, although he had promised Joseph, before he came out of prison, that he would mention him to his master. This was in order that the will of God respecting Joseph might be accomplished at the time known to God, i.e. when the king saw the vision.

155. Moreover, there are God's words to His Prophet: « On no account say of anything 'I shall do that tomorrow' without adding 'God willing' » (18.23). Thus God commanded His Prophet not to venture to do anything which might occur to him without using the exceptive phrase (28) in his speech. So God told His Prophet that « you should not say 'This will be' before you do it, save if I will that. » And the Prophet submitted to the command of God.

156. And Moses said: « Our Lord! Blot out every trace of their wealth, and straiten their hearts, and let them not believe, even when they see the painful chastisement » (10.88). So they were unable to believe when they saw the chastisement compelling them to believe, for if they had been able to do that they would have believed when they saw the chastisement beginning to descend on them. There are many such

(28) Arabic: *al-istithnāʾ*. An interesting discussion of the use of this phrase, still so common on the lips of the Arabic-speaking Muslim, will be found in *al-Rawḍat al-Bahiyya*, 6-8.

instances in the Book of God; but what we have used as proof suffices. Another instance is found in the words of God: « except the people of Jonah when they believed » (10.98) (29).

QUESTION

157. Someone may ask about what the daughter of Shuʿaib said to her father: « O father, engage him. The best of those whom you have engaged is this strong and faithful man » (28.26). Al-Jubbāʾī claimed that this verse means that she declared Moses to be strong enough for the work of which her father stood in need. And he argued from that, as he claimed, that the capacity is prior to the act. How impossible for him to deduce this conclusion from this verse in any way at all! For she did not know Moses before he removed the stones and drew the bucket, but only after she had seen his power and strength and fidelity. And that was because, when she returned to him the second time and said to him « My father summons you » (28.25), Moses said to her: « Walk behind me and direct me along the way ». For the wind was describing her to him, and fear overtook Moses, and therefore he said to her: « Walk behind me and make known to me the way, right, left, and ahead, by your tongue », and she did that (30). Then when she came to her father and told him that Moses was strong and faithful, her father was very angry with her and said to her: « My daughter, you know his strength from what you have seen of him. But how do you know his fidelity? » Then she told him what she had seen him do. How, then, could she have known that he was capable because

(29) Ashʿarī's point seems to be that the people of Jonah were not able to believe until God enabled them to do so.

(30) The Qurʾānic text is quite economical and contains none of the details mentioned by Ashʿarī — least of all the indignant question of Shuʿaib.

of what preceded the act, when that was manifest to her only after he had done it? So it is certain, according to us, and certain too the argument against our adversaries, that his capacity for that must have coexisted with his very doing of it.

158. The rational proof of that is the fact that, if we were to see a man actually praying, we should not know precisely when his capacity had begun to exist for him. However, we should know from the act itself that his capacity was evidently for the act, i.e. the prayer which he was performing. And our argument against our adversary, in all the questions which he may propose on the subject of the capacity, is just like what we have sketched in the foregoing exposition and explanation. And in God is help!

QUESTION

159. Q. What about God's words: « I created jinn and men only that they might adore me » (51.56)?

A. By those words God meant some of the jinn and men, i.e. those of them who do adore God. For He said in another place: « And we have created for hell many jinn and men » (7.179/178) — and the Qur'ān does not contradict itself. So God must have created many for hell, because of the verse which we have just cited; and He must have created some of them to adore Him, because of His words « I created jinn and men only that they might adore me ». And those whom He has created to adore Him are those who He has willed should adore Him and who end by adoring Him.

160. Q. What about God's words: « God did not institute any Baḥīra, or Sā'iba, or Waṣīla, or Ḥāmi (31); but those who disbelieve fabricate a lie against God » (5.103/102)?

(31) Different kinds of camels, named from certain practices of the pagan Arabs.

A. They mean: I did not enjoin that upon them, nor did I command them that, but they lied against me and fabricated a lie in what they said, i.e. that I had commanded them that.

161. The Qur'ānic proof that God can enjoin what cannot be done is His remark to the angels: « Tell me the names of these » (2.31/29) — i.e. the names of creatures — when they did not know that and were unable to do it. God also said that the impious « will be called upon to prostrate themselves and will be unable to do it » (68.42). So if God can enjoin upon men in the next life what they will be unable to do, that is also possible in this life. Moreover, God has commanded justice; yet He said: « You will never be able to treat your wives justly, even though you be eager to do so » (4.129/128).

162. Q. What about God's words: « God wills no injustice for creatures » (40.31/33), and: « God wills no injustice for the Worlds » (3.108/104)?

A. They mean that God Himself has not willed to wrong them, although He has willed that they should wrong one another.

163. Q. What about God's words: « Those who have become polytheists will say: 'Had God willed, we should not have become polytheists, nor our fathers'» — to His words (32) — « Thus did those who preceded them give the lie » (6.148/149)?

A. They said that mockingly and not by way of belief. So God called them liars for saying what they did not believe, just as He called the Hypocrites liars for saying mockingly: « We testify that you are indeed the Apostle of

(32) This phrase indicates that Ash'arī has abbreviated his citation of the verse.

God » (63.1); and God said: « And God knows that you are indeed His Apostle, and God testifies that the Hypocrites are indeed liars » (*ibid.*).

164. Q. What about God's words: « God wills for you ease; and He does not will for you hardship » (2.185/181)?

A. God meant that they would not be guilty or culpable because of omitting to fast when travelling or sick, and that they would not be in hardship because of their breaking the fast.

165-179

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION OF THE IMPUTATION OF JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE TO GOD (1)

165. Q. Is God able to grant a favor such that, had He effected it in the unbelievers they would have believed?

A. Yes — and the proof of that is the fact that God can effect in the believers and in His servants that which, had He effected it in them, they would surely have done mischief in the earth. For God has said: « And had God given more ample sustenance to His servants they would surely have done mischief in the earth » (42.27/26); and « Were it not that men would have formed one community » — i.e. in unbelief — « we would surely have appointed, for those who are ungrateful to the Benefactor, roofs of silver for their houses and stairs of silver on which they might mount » (43.33/32). Hence, since God can effect in creatures that which, had He effected it in them, they would have all disbelieved, He can also effect in them that which, had He effected it in them, they would have all believed. Moreover, we have already proved that the existence of the capacity entails the existence of the act. So if God can empower men to believe, He can also effect that which, had He effected it in them, they would have all believed.

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(1) *Irshād*, 233-265. Averroes strongly criticizes the main principle underlying this section. *Teologia*, 334 ff.

166. Q. Then since God has not effected in unbelievers what would ensure their belief, He has been miserly towards them.

A. Miserliness consists in the agent's not doing what he ought to do. But when something is a matter of generosity, he who is generous is free to be generous with that or not to be generous. And in such a case no miserliness attaches to the agent if he does not do the thing (2).

167. Q. Since God has not effected in unbelievers what would ensure their belief, has He thereby willed their folly and unbelief ?

A. Yes — and we have explained that in the course of an earlier discussion (3).

QUESTION

168. Then one should say to them : If, since God has not effected in unbelievers what would ensure their belief, He must will their perversity, why do you deny that, since He created them while knowing that they would disbelieve, He must have willed their unbelief ? They may say that he who wills folly is foolish. One should ask them : Is it not true that the Creator of him who He knows will disbelieve is not foolish because He creates him, and that His creating him is not folly ? Why, then, do you deny that the Creator was not foolish when He willed their folly ? But we have already discussed this question in an earlier section.

(2) Cf. N° 41, supra.
(3) Cf. N° 63-4, supra.

QUESTION

169. Q. Is God free to inflict pain on infants in the next life (4) ?

A. God is free to do that, and in doing it He would be just. Likewise, whenever He inflicts an infinite (5) punishment for a finite sin, and subordinates some living beings (6) to others, and is gracious to some and not to others, and creates men knowing well that they will disbelieve — all that is justice on His part. And it would not be evil on the part of God to create them in the painful punishment and to make it perpetual. Nor would it be evil on His part to punish the believers and to introduce the unbelievers into the Gardens. Our only reason for saying that He will not do that is that He has informed us that He will punish the unbelievers — and He cannot lie when He gives information.

170. The proof that He is free to do whatever He does is that He is the Supreme Monarch, subject to no one, with no superior over Him who can permit, or command, or chide, or forbid, or prescribe what He shall do and fix bounds for Him. This being so, nothing can be evil on the part of God. For a thing is evil on our part only because we transgress the limit and bound set for us and do what we have no right to do. But since the Creator is subject to no one and bound by no command, nothing can be evil on His part (7).

(4) Cf. *Ibāna*, 112. (The passage in the middle of that page apparently should read : « The Banū Ismā'īl (or : Isrā'īl ?), their little ones (reading *ṣighāruhum*) are in hell ».)
(5) Arabic : *lā yatanāhā* — which will never end.
(6) Arabic : *al-ḥayawān*. The context seems to require « men », though other rational creatures (angels and jinn) may be included.
(7) This is the doctrine which Averroes finds so distasteful. As he points out, and as the next number makes clear, there can be nothing good or bad *in se*.

171. O. Then lying is evil only because God has declared it to be evil.

A. Certainly. And if He declared it to be good, it would be good; and if He commanded it, no one could gainsay Him.

172. O. Then allow that God can lie, just as you allow that He can command lying!

A. Not everything which God can command can be predicated of Him. Do you not see that He has commanded us to pray and to be submissive and to move, yet He cannot pray and be submissive and move, because that is impossible for Him? Likewise, He cannot lie, not because it is evil, but because it is impossible for Him to lie. So He cannot be qualified by the power to lie, just as He cannot be qualified by the power to move and to be ignorant. For it one could claim that the Creator can be qualified by the power to lie but not by the power to be ignorant, without introducing any distinction, then another could reverse the statement and claim that the Creator can be qualified by the power to be ignorant but not by the power to lie. Since that is impossible, what they say is false ([8]).

173. O. When God commands us to pray our prayer consists of the motions by which we move when we pray; and the man who moves is moving because motion inheres in him. But he who curses and lies is cursing and lying only because he effects cursing and lying, and not because they inhere in him.

(8) Ash'arī does not seem to have reached the heart of the difficulty. His abhorrence of predicating lying of God may ostensibly have been dictated by his reading of revelation and tradition, but it is hard to escape the feeling that it was also the result of an instinctive aversion found in all normal men and based on the objective evil of lying.

174. A. The argument by which they constrain us to admit that the Creator can lie — far exalted He above that! — is that He can command lying; for He must be able to be qualified by everything which He can command ([9]). If that be so, then, if God can command that the motions by which we move and the prayer by which we pray inhere ([10]) in us, it must be possible for motions by which He would move and prayer by which He would pray to inhere in Him! Unless, indeed, they mean to say: If God can command another to lie, why can He not effect a lie by which that other will be lying, just as, if He commands another to pray, He can effect for that other a prayer by which he will be praying? If they ask the question in this form, it is something undeniable.

175. However, if the man who prays is praying because prayer inheres in him, just as the man who moves is moving because motion inheres in him, then every atom ([11]) of the man, when prayer inheres in him, must be praying, just as every atom of the man, when motion inheres in him, must be moving. Moreover, in our language « prayer » is « invocation ». So if the man who prays is praying because prayer inheres in him, then he must also be invoking because invocation inheres in him. But they hold this to be false.

176. Furthermore, if the Creator can effect for another a prayer by which He Himself will be praying, why can He not effect for another a volition by which He will be willing, and a speech by which He will be speaking?

O. The man who speaks and wills is speaking and willing because he effects the speech and the willing.

A. Then why do you deny that the man who prays

(9) This seems to be an evasion, for the adversaries have not really made such a sweeping claim, as is clear from N° 173.

(10) This is the verb « *ḥalla* » — cf. n. 12 to Chapter Five.

(11) Arabic: *juz'*.

is praying because he effects the prayer in himself, and that the man who moves is moving because he effects the motion in himself ?

O. One of us may move without effecting the motion.

A. And one may will and speak who does not effect willing or speech, e.g. the passionate lover who loves his beloved with an uncontrollable love, and the sleeper, or epileptic, who utters insuppressible speech.

O. The love of the passionate lover is not really love, nor is his willing really willing.

A. Neither is the speech of the epileptic and of the sleeper really speech ! Nor is the speech of a man who is awake really speech ! Nor is the willing of the passionate lover really willing ! This is nonsense which anyone can refute !

177. Moreover, if the man who prays is praying because prayer inheres in him, then is not the submissive man submissive, according to you, because submissiveness inheres in him? For submissiveness is in the heart, whereas the whole man is submissive. If they claim that the heart is submissive and lowly, we force them to admit that it is the tongue which is really speaking and the heart which is really willing. *They* : The man who is submissive is not submissive because submissiveness inheres in him. *We* : Then if God commands us to be submissive, according to your reasoning He must Himself be submissive. *They* : No, but He effects submissiveness for another. *We* : And just so, if He commanded us to lie He could effect lying for another. *They* : The man who lies is lying because he himself effects the lying. *We*: Then the same is true of the man who is submissive. *They* : The submissive man is submissive neither because submissiveness inheres in him nor because he effects it. *We* : The same is true of the liar. Moreover, if God commanded us to move, could He not cause us to be moving ?

They : Yes. *We* : Likewise, then, if He commanded us to lie, He could cause us to be lying.

178. Furthermore, do you not claim that prayer, when it exists, consists of motions, and that the man who moves is moving because motion inheres in him, and that the man who prays is praying because prayer inheres in him ? If they reply affirmatively, one should say to them : Then, if a man obeys by effecting a motion which God has commanded him to effect, he must be obeying because obedience inheres in him, just as he is moving because motion inheres in him. If they agree, one should say to them : Then part of the man is obedient and part of him is disobedient when disobedience inheres in him. They must admit this. Then one should say to them : Why, therefore, do you deny that part of the man may be speaking, I mean his tongue, and part of him knowing and willing, I mean his heart ? They may say : When the motion is obedience, then the man who moves is moving because the motion inheres in him ; but the obedient man is not obedient because obedience inheres in him, but rather because he effects the obedience. One should reply : Then why do you deny, when the motions are prayer, — and the man who moves is moving because motion inheres in him — that the man who prays is praying because he effects the prayer, and not because the prayer inheres in him ?

179. If they agree with that, one should say to them : Then if God can command us to pray, but cannot Himself pray, it must be admitted that, if He commanded us to lie, He could not Himself lie, but rather could effect lying for us, just as He can effect prayer for us without being able to pray Himself. So say the same of lying! Moreover, when God commands us to move, He makes for us the motions by which we move. Likewise, then, if He commanded us to lie, why would it be impossible for Him to make for us a lie by which we should be lying ?

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION OF FAITH

180. Q. What, in your opinion, is faith in God? (1)

A. It is belief in God. On that there is a consensus of those who speak the language in which the Qur'ān was revealed. God said: « We have sent no Apostle to teach, save in the language of his people » (14.4). He also said: « in plain Arabic speech » (26.195). Now faith, in the language in which God sent down the Qur'ān, is belief. God Himself said: « You do not have faith in us even though we are truthful » (12.17)— i.e. you do not believe us. And everybody says: « So-and-so has faith in the punishment of the grave and intercession », meaning that he believes in that. So faith must be that which is faith according to those who speak the language, i.e. it must be belief.

181. Q. What about the sinner who belongs to the People of the Qibla (1 bis): is he a believer?

A. Yes — a believer by reason of his faith, a sinner by reason of his sin and grave fault. Those who speak the language are agreed that he who strikes is a striker, and he who

(1) The reader may consult with profit *Tritton* and MC, Indices, s.v. Faith. He will note that in this chapter Ash'arī passes very quickly from the discussion of faith as such to the famous question: Is the grave Muslim sinner a believer?

(1 bis) i.e. those who turn to the same direction (Mecca) when they pray.

kills is a killer, and he who disbelieves is a disbeliever, and he who sins is a sinner, and he who believes (2) is a believer. Likewise, then, he who has faith is a believer.

182. If the sinner were neither believer nor unbeliever, he would neither disbelieve nor believe, and consequently would neither profess God's unicity nor deny it, would be neither friend nor enemy of God. Since that cannot be, it is impossible that the sinner be, as the Mu'tazila claim, neither believer nor unbeliever.

183. Moreover, if the sinner was a believer before he sinned, by reason of his profession of God's unicity, then adultery occurring after such profession does not annul the name which issues from the faith which he has not forsaken.

184. Furthermore, before the advent of Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā' (3), the chief of the Mu'tazila, men followed two opinions. The Khawārij (4) among them regarded grave sinners as unbelievers, whereas the « People of Rectitude » maintained that the grave sinner was a believer by reason of his faith and a sinner by reason of his grave sin. But no one said that he was neither believer nor unbeliever before the advent of Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā'. The latter withdrew from the Community and departed from its view, and because of his divergence from the consensus he was called a « withdrawer » (Mu'tazilī) (5). So from the absence of consensus on his view — for the Muslims were agreed that the disobedient member of the « People of the Prayer » must

(2) Here the verb is *ṣaddaqa*, and in the next phrase *āmana*; but it is difficult to bring this out in the translation.

(3) Cf. *Tritton*, 60; *Watt*, 63; and art. Waṣil b. 'Aṭā', in EI or Hwb.

(4) *Tritton*, 35 ff.; *Watt*, 32 ff.; MC, Index, s.v. Kharidjites; art. Khāridjiten, EI or Hwb.

(5) Or: seceder, Cf. Nallino, *Sull'origine del nome dei Mu'taziliti*, in Rivista degli Studi Orientali, VII (1916-18), 420-454. (Reprinted in *Raccolta di scritti etc.*, II, 170 ff.)

be either a believer or an unbeliever — one must conclude that Wāṣil's view is false.

185. Besides, if one could say that he who has faith and commits a grave sin is neither believer nor unbeliever, one could also say: Nay, but he is a believer by reason of his faith, and it should not be said that he is a sinner by reason of his sin. Since this cannot be said, because there can be no sin which does not belong to a sinner, their assertion is also impossible, for there can be no faith which does not belong to a believer.

CHAPTER NINE

DISCUSSION OF THE PARTICULAR AND THE UNIVERSAL, AND OF THE PROMISE AND THE THREAT(1)

186. Q. Tell us about God's words: « while the profligate will certainly be in a burning fire » (82.14); and: « Who does that unjustly and wrongfully, we shall roast him with fire » (4.30/34); and: « Truly those who consume the wealth of orphans wrongfully are only consuming fire in their bellies, and they shall endure the blazing fire » (4.10/11).

A. God's words, « Who does that unjustly », may be interpreted as applying to *all* who do that, or as applying to *some*. For the word « who » in our language applies sometimes to all, and sometimes to some. Hence, since the form of the word occurs now with the meaning of « some », and again with the meaning of « all », one cannot affirm positively, from its form alone, that it means « all » or « some ».

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(1) The real question in this chapter is: Will any believer (Muslim) be condemned to hell *forever* ? Ashʿarī's answer, briefly, is : No— unless he commit the unforgivable sin of *shirk* (polytheism, associating others with God). But since, in such a case, he would cease to be a Muslim, we may say that his answer is simply: No. It is not that God could not, but that He will not. Difficulties arise from certain Qur'ānic texts which seem to consign to hell those who commit other sins, and it is these texts which Ashʿarī must explain.

187. Likewise, one cannot conclude that God's words, « while the profligate will certainly be in a burning fire » and « those who consume », refer to « some » or « all », since those expressions sometimes refer to « all », and again to « some ». If one could claim that the form means only « all » until it is proved to mean « some », he would have no more right to make this claim than another would have to say that this expression compels one to conclude that it means « some » until it is proved to mean « all ». So since both claimants would have the same right of assertion, both assertions must be excluded.

188. The poet Zuhair (2) said: « Who is not profuse in flattery will be rent by fangs and trodden underfoot ». But that is not true of everyone who does not use flattery. He also said: « Who does not wrong men will himself be wronged ». But not everyone who does not wrong men is himself wronged. Moreover, a speaker says: « There came to me whom I loved » — meaning only one person. And one says: « The merchants came to me » — although all of them did not come to him. And one says: « My neighbors came to me » — although all of them did not come to him. And one says: « The profligate cursed me abominably » — without meaning all of them. Hence, since these expressions occur at times meaning « all », and at other times meaning « some », one cannot conclude that they mean « all » rather than « some », or « some » rather than « all », unless one has some positive indication.

189. Moreover, if one had to conclude from the form of these verses to the punishment of every profligate man, and of everyone who consumes the wealth of orphans wrongfully, and of everyone who consumes the wealth of men wastefully, then one would have to conclude that all those « People of the

(2) A famous pre-Islamic poet. The citations are from his « *muʿallaqa* » — a special prize-winning poem.

Prayer » who profess God's unicity will be in the Garden from the ostensible meaning of God's words: « Those who will come with a good work will have something better than it; and on that day they will be safe from any fear » (27.89/91). And from the ostensible meaning of God's words: « Reckon not those as dead who are killed while fighting for God. On the contrary they are alive, and with their Lord have sustenance » (3.169/163), one would have to conclude that everyone killed while fighting for God is in the Gardens and there has sustenance. And from the ostensible meaning of God's words: « God indeed forgives sins, all of them! » (39.53/54), one would have to conclude that every sin can be forgiven, except (3) the sin of which God informed the Apostle, and the Muslims are agreed, that it is unforgivable, i.e. the sin of polytheism and unbelief. So one has no more right to say that the threat-verses are universal and the others particular than one has to reverse the statement and to say that the threat-verses are particular and the others universal.

190. Moreover, if one had to conclude from the ostensible meanings of the verses that every profligate man and everyone who consumes the wealth of orphans wrongfully will be in hell, then one could conclude (mendaciously) (4) from God's words: « Each time a group is cast into it its guardians ask them: 'Did no one come to warn you?' They reply: 'Yes, one came to warn us, but we belied and said: God has sent down nothing!' » (67.8-9), that only the unbeliever enters the Fire. And from the ostensible meaning of God's words: « Therefore have I warned you of a fiercely blazing Fire which only the most impious must endure, who

(3) So the text seems to read, though we should have expected something like « even that sin... ».

(4) The « *mukadhdhiban* » of the original seems awkwardly placed, or even superfluous.

belies and turns away » (92.14-16), one could conclude that all who endure the Fire are such. And from the ostensible meaning of God's words: Who judge not by what God has sent down, they, they are the profligate ! » (5.47/51), one could conclude that only the profligate man refrains from judging by what God has sent down. Since, then, these verses do not compel one to conclude that only the unbeliever enters the Fire, the previously cited verses do not compel one to conclude that every profligate man will be in hell, and that everyone who consumes the wealth of orphans wrongfully and everyone who consumes the wealth of men wastefully will be in the Fire. And the answer to every verse which they use as an argument regarding the threat is like the answer to these verses.

191. God's words, « Who does that unjustly and wrongfully » (4.30/34), are to be interpreted as meaning: « Who does that while declaring it licit ». So they apply to all who are such. And His words, « while the profligate will certainly be in a burning fire » (82.14), are to be interpreted as meaning « some of them », i.e. the unbelievers among them. So they apply to all who are such. One should reply in the same way respecting every verse urged in proof of the universality of the threat.

192. Moreover, the Muʿtazila are constrained to admit that all « those of the Left » are unbelievers because of the ostensible meaning of God's words: « The Companions of the Left ! What are the Companions of the Left ? They are in burning wind and boiling water and pall of smoke, neither refreshing nor rain-bearing. Once, indeed, they used to live delicately while they persisted in the Great Sin. And they were wont to say: 'When we shall have died and become dust and bones, shall we indeed be raised again ?' » (56.41-47/40-47), and from His words: « But he who will be given his book in his left hand will say: 'Would that I had not been given my book ! ' He was indeed wont not to believe in God the Mighty and not to urge the feeding of the poor » (69.25-34) (5).

(5) Ashʿarī also seems to have held the orthodox doctrine on the intercession of Muḥammad, though it is not mentioned in this work. Cf. *Ibāna*, 130-131. So even though a Muslim grave sinner were to be consigned to hell, he would certainly come forth ultimately and enter paradise.

CHAPTER TEN

DISCUSSION OF THE IMAMATE (1)

193. Q. What is the proof of Abū Bakr's Imāmate ? (2).

A. The proof of that is that we find men divided into three classes: 1) those who hold the Imāmate of ʿAlī after

(1) i.e. the Caliphate. A caliph (*khalīfa*) is a vicar, or vicegerent. An *imām* is a leader, leader of the prayer, leader of the Community, or of some section of it, etc. The earlier Muslim writers prefer the terms « *Imāma* » and « *Imām* » to « Caliphate » and « Caliph ». The reader may consult Arnold's *The Caliphate*, or his article, Khalīfa, in EI or Hwb. A modern work which is of interest in view of Kemal Atatürk's abolition of the Caliphate is *Le Califat dans la doctrine de Rashīd Riḍā*, Beyrouth, 1938 (H. Laoust's annotated translation of Rashīd Riḍā's *al-Khilāfa, aw al-Imāmat al-ʿUẓmā*, Cairo, 1341/1922-3). There is also much valuable material in the text and notes of Laoust's *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Taki-d-dīn Aḥmad b. Taimīya.*

Other discussions : *Ibāna*, 133-136 ; *Tamhīd*, 160-239 ; *Irshād*, 344-363 ; *Justo Medio*, 348-364 ; *Ḥillī*, 62-81 ; *Fyzee*, 89-100.

(2) Abū Bakr was de facto the first Caliph. Was he also such de jure? This is the basic question which has caused so much shedding of Muslim blood, and of Muslim ink. Though it is not strictly a dogmatic question, it certainly had a great deal of influence on the development of dogma in Islam. The primary question is the one which Ashʿarī discusses briefly in this chapter: Did the Prophet Muḥammad explicitly designate his successor (*naṣṣ*) before he died, or was the choice of a successor a matter to be settled by election (*ikhtigār*). The Shīʿa held, and hold, the former ; the Sunnīs champion the latter view.

the Apostle (3) ; 2) those who hold the Imāmate of al-ʿAbbās (4); 3) those who hold the Imāmate of Abū Bakr. Now we see that ʿAlī and al-ʿAbbās swore allegiance to Abū Bakr and submitted to his command in company with all the Muslims (5). Even though some put off swearing allegiance for a time, they finally agreed to swear allegiance to him, and to be guided by his leadership, and to rally under his banner, and to obey his orders. Moreover, they addressed him with the words: « O Caliph of the Apostle of God ! » And it is impossible for the Community to agree on an error (6).

194. No one has any right to claim that the interior sentiments of ʿAlī and al-ʿAbbās were the contrary of those which they displayed (7). For if that were possible, we should be unable to conclude to the soundness of any consensus of the Community on anything. For we should never be sure but that the interior sentiments of some of the Community might be the contrary of those manifested exteriorly by them. Therefore, since the manifest agreement of the Community gives us certain knowledge of the consensus, we should ignore what anyone may claim regarding interior sentiments. One making such claims would be like a Khārijite who affirms that ʿAlī's interior sentiments were the contrary of those which he actually displayed. Hence, since this would do away with all consensus, one must conclude to the Imāmate of Abū Bakr from

(3) The Shīʿa, i.e. the party of ʿAlī, who married Fāṭima, the daughter of Muḥammad. Cf. Donaldson, *The Shiʿite Religion*, London, 1933. They split up into many sects — cf. *Tritton*, 206-7.

(4) The uncle of Muḥammad. Cf. *Tritton*, 29 (the Hurairiya).

(5) The traditional orthodox view of early Islamic history is for the most part that set forth in Muir's *The Caliphate, Its Rise, Decline and Fall*, Revised Ed. 1924.

(6) Muḥammad is related to have said : « My Community will not agree on an error ». Cf. Wensinck, *Handbook*, 48 A.

(7) i. e. that they only pretended to swear allegiance to Abū Bakr.

the investiture of those Muslims who invested him with it, and the oath of allegiance of the Refugees and Helpers who swore allegiance to him, and the agreement of the Muslims of his time on him — especially since ʿAlī and al-ʿAbbās tendered their allegiance to him of their own accord and acknowledged his Imāmate and succession to the Apostle. Therefore, if, by consensus, the Imāmate concerned only these three, and if ʿAlī and al-ʿAbbās swore allegiance to Abū Bakr in company with all the Muslims, Abū Bakr must have been the Imām to whom obedience was due.

195. The Qurʾān has pronounced on the Imāmate of al-Ṣiddīq and of al-Fārūq. (8) For God said, in the Sura of Quittance, to those who refrained from helping His Prophet and stayed back from fighting with him: « Say: You shall never again go out with me, and you shall never fight with me against an enemy! You were pleased to stay at home a first time: then stay at home with those who remain behind! » (9.83/84). And in another Sura He said: « Those left behind will say, when you set out in quest of booty, 'Let us follow you.' — wishing to change what God has said » (48.15) — i. e. His words: « You shall never again go out with me, and you shall never fight with me against an enemy! » Then God said: « Thus did God speak to you on a previous occasion. And they will say: 'But you are envious of us'. Nay, but they have very little understanding » (48.15). Then He said: « Say to those desert Arabs who were left behind: You will be called upon to fight against a people of great valor until they shall surrender; and if you obey, God will give you a fine recompense » — i.e. if you obey him who will call upon you to fight them, God will give you a fine recompense — « but if you turn away » — i.e. if you refuse to answer the call of him who will

(8) « The Trusting » and « The Discerner » — complimentary epithets applied respectively to Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.

call upon you to fight them — « as you turned away before » — i.e. as you refused before — « He will punish you with a grievous punishment » (48.16).

196. Now we know that the one who called upon them was not the Prophet, because God had said to His Prophet: « Say: You shall never again go out with me » (9.83/84), and He said in the Sura of Victory: « wishing to change what God has said » (48.15). So God denied that they would go out with His Prophet, and characterized their going out with him as a changing of His word. Hence the one who called upon them, and whom they were ordered to follow, must have been someone who would call upon them after the Apostle.

197. Men have maintained two opinions. Some said that the people of great valor were the Persians and the Byzantines; and others said that they were the Yamāmites. Now Abū Bakr fought the Byzantines and the Yamāmites, and the Persians were fought during his lifetime, and were conquered after his death. Hence, if the people of great valor were the Yamāmites or the Byzantines, Abū Bakr fought them — which necessitates his Imāmate. And if they were the Persians, they were fought in his lifetime and were later finished off by ʿUmar — which necessitates the Imāmate of ʿUmar. But if ʿUmar's Imāmate be certain, then the Imāmate of Abū Bakr must also be certain: because Abū Bakr invested ʿUmar with the office. So if the text means him who fought the Persians and finished them off, then, if ʿUmar's Imāmate be certain, Abū Bakr's Imāmate must also be certain — because Abū Bakr was the one who invested ʿUmar with the Imāmate.

198. Thus what we have cited from the Qurʾān proves the Imāmate of al-Ṣiddīq and of al-Fārūq. And if Abū Bakr's Imāmate be certain because of the proofs which we have mentioned — from the ostensible meaning of the Qurʾān and the consensus of the Muslims of his time on it — then the view